



**KANGAROOS AND DRAGONS:**  
**THE 1923 CHINESE FOOTBALL TOUR OF AUSTRALIA**

**A thesis submitted for the degree  
of Master of Philosophy at the  
Australian National University**

**by**

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“Li Wai Tong” *Bulletin*, 30 August 1923, p. 31.

This thesis contains no material which has previously been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in an university or other institution and, to the best of my knowledge, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

## **Abstract**

The 1923 tour of Australia by a Chinese soccer team generated considerable public attention. It was, and was intended to be, a series of events that placed these athletes in contrast to prevailing stereotypes of the Chinese in Australia. Much more than a spectacle or curiosity, however, the tour provided an opportunity for a range of interests to advance their claims and to find, in relation to each other, new points of synthesis on issues of race, class, immigration, trade and the place of the Australian nation in a post World War One context. This thesis offers an account of the tour and an analysis of the aspirations invested in it by its promoters, the press, businessmen, politicians, Chinese communities and spectators. The tour's impact is hard to assess, but its significance in reflecting this synthesis and these aspirations is considerable.

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## Abbreviations

CAAU:	Chinese Amateur Athletic Union
CFA:	Commonwealth Football Association
HKFA:	Hong Kong Football Association
KMT:	Kuo Min Tang
MCG:	Melbourne Cricket Ground
NSW:	New South Wales
NSWRL:	New South Wales Rugby League
NSWSFA:	New South Wales Soccer Football Association
SCAA:	South China Athletic Association
SCG:	Sydney Cricket Ground
<i>SCMP:</i>	<i>South China Morning Post</i>
QFA:	Queensland Football Association
YMCA:	Young Men's Christian Association

## Acknowledgements

The idea of writing about a Chinese soccer tour, and yes most people call it football now, came about through my interests in the historicising of the early soccer internationals involving Australia. Having already completed, yet not published, a history of the first ever International tour by Australia, that to New Zealand in 1922, this appeared the next logical step. Yet, when a person, who shall remain nameless, suggested that I take up a Masters on the topic, it all seemed like a good idea at the time. Don't worry Stephen, I know where you live.

That became four years of torment, working full-time and researching part-time. Yet, it also involved two Universities. I initially enrolled through Griffith University, Gold Coast with Kristine Toohey and Dwight Zakus, both of whom I should give my many thanks for the grounding they provided me in my learning experience. In 2007 I chose to withdraw from Griffith and take up my studies at the ANU, the main reason being the direction I wanted to take, history instead of business.

Here at the ANU I found a superb supervisor, and a very supportive panel. To my supervisor Nick Brown, I could not have completed this without what I have learnt on my way through this journey. To Ann Curthoys, Alastair Greig and Ben Wellings, your comments and support were much appreciated.

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## Introduction

In the second half of 1923 Australians witnessed an extraordinary event. A team of 16 Chinese athletes and a manager came to Australia to participate in a soccer tour. Over the three months of the event, the Chinese would travel to all States except Western Australia and contest a total of 24 matches, five of which were classified as Internationals. Their results were on par with the Australians as they won eight matches, drew seven and lost nine. Yet what is exceptional about the tour is that fact that the Chinese were welcomed enthusiastically, more or less, everywhere they went.

The response by the Australian public, press and government to the tour draws out a number of key issues that hold interest. Firstly, these are Chinese and we are told that, in this period, there was an entrenched racial prejudice in Australia against the Chinese race. Australians had developed disparaging and demeaning perceptions of the Chinese that had been based on decades of history and eventually led to the *Immigration Restriction Act* (1901) and the policies of a White Australia. Yet here is an event that partly dispelled this prejudice and in many interesting ways.

It is a sporting tour within a racial context. During the period other sporting tours of non-white sportsmen took place in Australia, of which there is ample analysis. For example the Jack Johnson v Tommy Burns boxing contest in 1908, held at Rushcutters Bay in Sydney, drew strong and antagonistic racial descriptions of Johnson from the media and the public.<sup>1</sup> It was a confrontation of brute force and sophisticated modernity. Reactions to the Chinese soccer players, however, show that the tour did not fit this racialised model.

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<sup>1</sup> see Geoffrey Ward, *Unforgiveable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* (New York: Knopf, 2004).

What is most intriguing about the tour is the extent to which it did not simply rehearse established racist themes, but revealed the contexts in which these themes were defined and increasingly questioned. Far from sitting in steady categories of racial prejudice, the tour started to engage with other questions about trade, immigration, education and class. Particularly as the athletes prepared to return to China, the commentary on the tour extended to cover a remarkably wide range of topics. The purpose of this thesis is to explore each of these elements as they are revealed by the tour. This exploration will identify the ways in which the tour, from its inception as a part idiosyncratic, part entrepreneurial idea, encompassed a wide and intersecting range of agendas and interests. At once it became about much more than a visiting soccer team, but in crucial ways remained dependant of the very specific means by which that team could make links through the vehicle of sporting competition that would otherwise have been more problematic, if not impossible.

This thesis, thus, provides a study of the tour and much that it represented. As such, it is a cultural, social and sporting history and also, to some extent, a political history. It is essentially about some of the ways in which, through the intersecting perspectives of sport and race, Australians sought to find a new place for their nation, or at least reconsider aspects of older practices, in a post-World War I world. While drawing on an extensive literature in both fields of sport and race, I hope to bring a new synthesis to them through the analysis of an event that seems at first unexpected but which proved to have a wide context of meaning and significance.

A number of studies have drawn attention to the fusion of sport and race in discussing other tours of individuals or teams of non-white sportsmen to Australia during the early twentieth century. Such work centres on the extent to which these events either confirmed existing racialised categories or accommodated non-white achievement in essentially assimilationist understandings. Andrew Honey, for example, provides a

generalised discussion of three events – the Fijian cricket tour of 1907/08, that of the African-American pugilist Jack Johnson in 1908, and the West Indian cricket tour of 1930/31. In each case, Honey states, the visitors were attributed identities by the press that ensured they in no way challenged an ideal of an inherently separate White identity, such as “coloured” (Johnson), “blackfellows” (Indian cricketers) and “natives” (West Indian cricketers).<sup>2</sup> Richard Broome makes similar points in his detailed analysis of the popular reaction to Johnson.<sup>3</sup> Even in those instances in which a more accommodating version of exoticism was portrayed by visiting sportsmen, ways were found to ensure no established orthodoxies of racial division were disturbed. Gary Osmond and Murray Phillips’ discussion of the swimmer Alick Wickham of the Solomon Islands, for example, notes that he was credited with the racing stroke of swimming and was considered a socially acceptable ‘black’ sportsman. But such reception of visiting non-white athletes, they conclude, ‘was determined less by their ability and more by perceptions of their behaviour and assessments of how well they socially assimilated’.<sup>4</sup>

For the Chinese soccer players, the reception was different. From the first gestation of the idea of the tour, in the thinking of a New Zealand-based journalist, Harry Millard, great care was taken in the selection and presentation of a team that would rise above familiar stereotypes of the Chinese but do so in ways that were not so much about processes of assimilation but those of recognising equality in status and attainment. My analysis of the tour seeks to explain why this was the case and how it was achieved.

There has also been a recent resurgence of interest in Australian racial history, as Australian academics return to one of the established themes of Australian

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Honey, "Sport, Immigration Restriction and Race: The Operation of the White Australia Policy," in *Sport, Federation, Nation*, ed. John O'Hara, Richard Cashman and Andrew Honey (Sydney: Walla Walla Press, 2001), 31, 38, 42.

<sup>3</sup> see Richard Broome, "The Australian Reaction to Jack Johnson, Black Pugilist, 1907-1909," in *Sport in History*, ed. Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips, "'Look at That Kid Crawling': Race, Myth and the 'Crawl' Stroke," *Australian Historical Studies* 37, no. 127 (2006): 58.

historiography and seek to rehabilitate its capacity to explain the persistence and depth of anxiety and idealism surrounding ‘the race question’, and to reclaim experiences and identities that have been obscured by simplistic models of unchanging Australian racism. John Fitzgerald’s *Big White Lie* dismisses the myth that all Chinese in early Australia were servile and degraded as such, demonstrating that a class structure with educated middle class individuals, including merchantmen and other public figures, characterised many Australian Chinese communities and won from their Australian equivalents respect that might seem surprising today.<sup>5</sup> Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds take the analysis of race a step further as they venture into the global context with *Drawing the Global Colour Line*. They argue that Australia’s considerations of race were affected by trans-national forces, and that the power of race-derived thinking can only be appreciated when it is seen in the context of such sophisticated, entrenched and often dynamic systems of ideas.<sup>6</sup> Two other studies, David Walker’s *Anxious Nation* and Warwick Anderson’s *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, provide a constructive discussion of the problems perceived to be facing the northern parts of Australia, both in relation to security and the science and health of those who lived in this part of the country.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis draws much from these studies, particularly in an insistence that the ‘colour line’ must be given both a context and a time, and seen to be drawn and redrawn in the midst of historical change rather than simply scored permanently through the past. By focussing so specifically on a series of sporting events, however, I hope to take this “context and time” out from the history of ideas and place it in firmly in the mundane

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<sup>5</sup> John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men’s Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999); Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002).

world of the tour, among publicists and promoters, journalists and investors, cartoonists and crowds and the players themselves. This thesis is not so much about reclaiming the experience of any particular party to the tour, but of understanding the objectives that many different parties brought to it, and the extent to which – as a soccer tour – it met their hopes.

A few academics have already noted aspects of the tour. Phillip Mosely's work, the most comprehensive analysis so far available in publication, places the tour within the framework of a novelty event. He concentrates on the early matches where the crowds were the largest and ascribes to the theory that a combination of good publicity and the curiosity factor of viewing oriental gentlemen was the reason why people came to watch.<sup>8</sup> Both Honey and Richard Cashman also briefly discuss and interpret the tour in their analysis of sport and race at this time.<sup>9</sup> Honey goes furthest in his analysis, questioning how the tour conforms to the racialised atmosphere of the period. Were the Chinese 'treated as exceptional and exotic thereby avoiding the negative stereotyping of the resident Chinese Australian community? Or, did such images represent a shift in Australian attitudes towards the Chinese?' He concluded that the success of the tour 'may have acted as a critique of existing representations of Asians if not of the White Australia policy'.<sup>10</sup> Honey's questions are very important in my analysis of the tour and will be the object of extended treatment here. There are other, somewhat brief, references to the tour in local histories of soccer by Denis Harlow and Chris Hudson and the more comprehensive work of Mosely and Bill Murray.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Philip A Mosely, "'Playing Ball with Asia': Asian-Australian Links through Soccer," in *The World Game Downunder*, ed. Roy Hay and Bill Murray (Melbourne: Australian Society for Sports History Inc, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Honey, "Sport, Immigration Restriction and Race"; Richard Cashman, *Sport in the National Imagination* (Petersham, NSW: Walla Walla Press, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Honey, "Sport, Immigration Restriction and Race", 45.

<sup>11</sup> Denis Harlow, *History of Soccer in South Australia, 1902-2002* (Hindmarsh, S. Aust.: South Australian Soccer Federation, 2003); Chris Hudson, *A Century of Soccer, 1898-1998 : A Tasmanian History* (West Hobart, Tas.: Peacock Publishers, 1998); Philip A. Mosely and Bill

The questions advanced by Honey, the conclusions of Osmond and Phillips, and characterisations of the discourse of the Australian racial theorists each inform the discussion presented in this thesis. What I will be attempting here is to use this tour, or the amalgam of the smaller events within it, to develop a synthesis that draws on what each of these authors, and other historians, have argued. The texts mentioned define the field in which my thesis can be placed. But while there has been much work done on sport, race, and sport and race, my thesis also seeks to provide an intersection of sport, race and a number of other themes, including trade, immigration, education and class.

At this juncture I should also state that the word “soccer” has been used throughout this thesis, even though football is in the title. Although soccer is closer to the forms of football played in England during the early nineteenth century, in Australia at the time of the tour, the other three codes of “football” were acknowledged as more popular. In New South Wales and Queensland, rugby league was considered the prominent code of football, while in the other States of Australia, Australian rules held sway. The dominance of these sports was so strong that although soccer was the only sport to actually use the foot more often than not, the other “handball” codes were given the term of football by the press. The choice to use soccer here is to fit within the terminology of the time and to avoid confusion with the other codes. On occasions, a quote may use the word football, but otherwise, the term “football” in the general text refers to the grouping of codes including Australian rules, rugby union and rugby league.

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Murray, "Soccer," in *Sport in Australia: A Social History*, ed. Wray Vamplew, Brian Stoddart and Ian F. Jobling (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994).



Henry “Harry” Millard<sup>12</sup>

Throughout this thesis there is one truly enigmatic, but fascinating, individual. He is Henry “Harry” Millard, the main protagonist of the tour and the only individual involved from its conception to the end of the event. Born in Australia, Millard moved to New Zealand early in his life and became a journalist with leading press publications. I have tried to sketch, from various sources and through an interpretation of his thinking, as much as possible about him. Ultimately he remains elusive. But what is evident is that although Millard appears to be the linchpin of everything that took place with the tour, little would have happened without the steady engagement of other people. Not all of these shared his vision, but found elements of his project valuable to work with and for that sake were prepared to wear the rest.

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<sup>12</sup> This picture was provided to me without reference.

Given the complexities of the tour and the synthesis of issues that I explore, the thesis does not satisfy the demands of a chronological narrative. I have had to extract these issues and deal with each as a series of themes. This may lead to an element of repetition in my coverage of some aspects of the tour, but the recurrence of information will only underscore the ways in which the tour drew together many issues. The tour combined showmanship, shrewd business sense, manipulation of the press, political jockeying and a fair degree of idealism and genuine public interest. Within this mix, individuals played various parts, deals waxed and waned, and inconsistencies abounded. Far from a “novelty event”, the tour was a microcosm of a time of considerable change, initiative and frustration. Each chapter will have its own combination of these elements to throw into the mix.

Chapter One will begin with a discussion of the context the tour is to be placed within. In the early 1920s debates about race and whiteness took on a new dimension as Australia adjusted to a post-war world in which economic, political and strategic issues required a reconsideration of established themes of racial segregation. It thus sets a necessary context for Chapter Two which offers an account of the strange, unlikely origins of the tour, and the trans-Tasman and sporting context in which the idea found support. Debates over what the team should do and who they should represent are examined through the eyes of a number of actors, both in China and in Australia.

Chapters three through six each examine a specific issue arising during the tour. Initially, Chapter Three reflects on the sport of soccer, yet it also engages in the concept of “sport space” as it illuminates the tour’s effect on other sports. Sport space, or those socially and geographically defined areas of spectators, media coverage and usage of grounds, was held strongly by the bastions of the established codes of football throughout Australia. Soccer was an upstart, an emerging sport with strong Imperial



roots, and the other codes needed to protect their sport space from this new-found, Chinese-led sporting invasion.

While the Australian soccer authorities used the tour for promotional reasons, the Chinese Australians put forward their own agendas. Chapter Four investigates the reaction of the local Chinese community to the tour through two parallel themes. On the one hand, the issue of class comes to the fore as a way of dismantling the stereotypes of a monolithic Chinese community. Above the stereotypical “market gardeners and laundrymen” of the day was a middle class of Chinese which ‘was skilled in trade and the movement of goods and capital that supported national development’.<sup>13</sup> This group sought both a stronger image of themselves in Australian society, but were also greatly energised by the development of a vigorous nationalist movement in China at the same time, and sought to secure recognition of that equivalent new nationalism. For this group, the tour had great advantages.

From the Chinese reaction to the tour to that of the White Australians, Chapter Five discusses how the local press reported the tour. While initially responding to the proposal of the tour in sensationalist terms, an element of inquisitiveness also developed and served a range of other objectives. The press of the time were heavily involved in race debates relating to immigration, miscegenation and the security of the north. A tour of Chinese sportsmen, who did not fit the general stereotypes, put forward an alternative dimension that required closer scrutiny. As the intrigue and hype surrounding the tour wore down, journalists responded to the lead of those who led the team and considered the consequences of a different image of the Chinese to national policy and social custom.

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<sup>13</sup> Paul Jones, "What Happened to Australia's Chinese between the World Wars," in *After the Rush: Regulation, Participation, and Chinese Communities in Australia 1860-1940*, ed. Sophie Couchman, John Fitzgerald and Paul Macgregor (Fitzroy, Vic: Arena Printing and Publishing, 2004), 232.

In each of Chapters One through to Five, commercial relations between Australia and China appears as a sub-plot to the general themes. Thus, in Chapter Six these come together as a final dimension is explored. Although Millard was not initially interested in encompassing trade in his vision of the tour, it would eventually figure substantially in his crusade to challenge the White Australia policy and its immigration restrictions against the Chinese.

From the start, the tour had a profound effect on public discussion. The press found the proposal intriguing. The public responded with equal fascination, and in this dynamic other interests found opportunities to inject their own particular enthusiasm into the domain of news and commentary. Part of the challenge of this thesis has been to capture the environment in which the tour had such an impact, and influence. For this reason, I have based most of the analysis on newspaper reports. However, as such interest also extended into the domains of trade and immigration, I have, where relevant, considered other sources including government documents. The newspapers can be divided into three sections: Australian English-language, Chinese English-language, and Australian Chinese-language press, each of which brought their own perspective to the tour, and its significance for the constituencies and their own agendas.

This thesis has lent itself to a mixture of English and Chinese texts. As well as the Chinese-language press from Australia, there are a number of Chinese texts that were translated for use in this thesis. Chinese names are written with the family name first, followed by the given names. I have used the same terminology in this thesis. Further, if possible, I have used the Cantonese version of the name instead of the pinyin for reasons that all of the English-language texts did so, and that the Chinese in Australia also used this variant.

This thesis is not only about an extraordinary event, but about Australia as it related to the tour in the period. The tour touched on, and probably influenced, a number of issues that are considered through the following chapters. It provides an example of the salutary lesson for historians that their view of a period or an event should always take into account the wider contexts that, while perhaps not always evident on the surface, are crucial in assessing their meaning.

## CHAPTER 1

### A White Australia

#### Introduction

As they toured in 1923 the Chinese soccer team was welcomed by all, and in the context of prevailing racist currents of thought in this period, this treatment appeared out of character for the Australian government, the press, and the people. For a country in which racial purity had been consolidated as a keystone of identity and policy - as evident in one of the first actions taken by the new Commonwealth government, the *Immigration Restriction Act* (1901) - the fact of the tour and its reception presented a marked contrast, one that did not fall within the monolith of understanding prescribed by a White Australia. The prevailing image of the Chinese – established through the nineteenth century – was as weak, emasculated, devious and unable to assimilate into Australian society: their threat was in undercutting the rights and dignity of male labour, of debauching white women, of corrupting society with the dark, secretive, sedentary pursuits of drugs and gambling. At every level this image challenged the core of the labourist, masculinist, muscular and collectivist themes in which Australian identity had been based. Since the 1850s the exclusion and elimination of all that the Chinese were taken to represent had informed policy, commentary and public opinion as part of the cultivation of a distinctively Australian sense of nation and society. Yet what was presented in 1923 on sporting fields around the country seemed to question if not unravel this monolith. These football players were educated, well-off, athletic Chinese who did not fit the entrenched, disparaging mould.

Not only did the tour appear to challenge this local consolidation, but it was also at variance with a more a sophisticated, highly refined defence of racial purity which served to unite the international company Australia was keeping among settler colonies turned modern nations by the end of the nineteenth century. To the nationalist populism readily available to politicians and journalists – ‘Australia for the White Man’ as the *Bulletin*’s famous credo – was added an international racial ‘science’ associated with the work of medical experts, anthropologists, lawyers and ‘men of letters’ that also found its way into public debate by the early twentieth century, and which located Australia in a global scheme of conceptualising racial hierarchy and aggressively defending ‘whiteness’. The incongruities evident in the more popular reception of the Chinese soccer players as a sporting team were complemented by the extent to which their tour, so carefully organised and widely discussed, seemed to question the prevalence of this globalised ‘scientific’ view.

This chapter begins by noting the extent to which the tour needs to be located at the intersection of these two forms of organised racism, both of which ‘set the scene’ for the tour’s impact. Equally importantly, however, I will explore three distinct lines of influence that provided the specific context for the events of 1923 – lines which revealed that this point of intersection in regard to views of the Chinese was by that point under some strain. These lines were the Trans-Pacific model of racial thinking, the Trans-Tasman dimension, and the Imperial perspective. The tour, I will argue, implicitly and explicitly challenged a delicate balance held by the 1920s between the national and international forms of racism and the political, economic and cultural influences that supported them. Prevailing notions about the link between population (white or coloured) and national development, about economic insecurity and protectionism, and about where Australia fitted into a British Empire that was itself inherently multi-racial, all started to unravel in the 1920s at the same time as the press

and the Australian public gathered in surprising numbers to watch the Chinese team perform on the soccer field. Australians were coming to view White Australia, and the racial question, differently, and the tour was an integral part of that process – not only in representing such questioning, but in engaging the interest and initiative of many who actively wished to break with older prejudices.

As this chapter will show, there was more on the minds of many in Australia in 1923 than just disparaging perceptions of market gardeners, laundrymen and shopkeepers. They were beginning to question the fundamentals of a policy of racial exclusion, and associated policies of protectionism and imperial deference, that had their origins decades before, but which after World War I were clearly needing reappraisal. Galvanising such questioning had been part of Millard's motivation from the start, but over time he proved far from alone in his awareness of new agendas to be advanced through the part unlikely, part perfectly adapted, vehicle of a football tour.

By way of a brief summary, however, it is important to note that Australian antagonism towards the Chinese had existed since the early 1830s, when Chinese had begun arriving as indentured labour to work the farms of pastoralists. Their arrival caused concern for colonial governments which saw the Chinese as threatening the fabric of an already fraught colonial experiment. By the 1850s, these governments restricted their opportunity to migrate to Australia for fear of the degeneration of the population and their competition with white labour at lower costs.<sup>1</sup> These restrictions were the beginning of immigration barriers to the Chinese which would carry through into the twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1923. Reprint, 1967), 1-5; Ann Curthoys, "Liberalisation and Exclusionism: A Prehistory of the White Australia Policy," in *Legacies of White Australia: Race, Culture and Nation*, ed. Jayasuriya Laksiri, David Walker and Jan Gothard (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2003), 11-13.

The development of these restrictive policies accelerated as the Chinese arrived to take part in the gold rushes from the mid-nineteenth century in the southern States and later in Queensland. The general concerns of the mainly British white population were with the inability of the Chinese to assimilate into an existing European society, and with the possibility of that society - itself being transformed by the European and American infusions of the gold miners - being swamped by increased migration from China.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the 1850s and 1860s, a number of Acts came into being in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, to curb this migration by use of an entry tax.<sup>3</sup> These measures were largely successful in ending Chinese migration such that by 1867 all restrictive legislation had been repealed as no longer necessary.<sup>4</sup> Even so, the pattern of restricting Chinese immigration, mainly through the entry tax, would be on the minds of Australian governments up until and after Federation.

Coming later in the progress of the gold rushes, the Queensland experience of racist anxiety had particular dimensions that also carried over into the twentieth century. The development of the new industries, such as sugar plantations after the 1860s, had been based on South Pacific Island labourers. The migration of Chinese to the goldfields of northern Queensland in the 1870s and 1880s fed debates about the capacity or appropriateness of white labour in the tropics, and the need in such circumstances of making exceptions to racial exclusion for the sake of development. Such health and environmental factors brought new elements into debates over race in Australia, and an increasingly trans-national exchange of ideas. In 1877 the Queensland government

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<sup>2</sup> Ann Curthoys, "'Chineseness' and Australian Identity," in *The Overseas Chinese in Australasia: History, Settlement and Interactions*, ed. Henry Chan, Ann Curthoys and Nora Chiang (Canberra: Centre for the Chinese Southern Diaspora, Australian National University, 2001), 17.

<sup>3</sup> Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, 18-21.

<sup>4</sup> Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, 28-35.

investigated the proceedings of the American Commission into the Chinese immigration, which had concluded that the unrestricted entry of Chinese was ‘ruinous to our labouring classes, promotive of caste, and dangerous to free institutions’.<sup>5</sup> From this point onwards, Australian parliamentarians increasingly opened their minds to the rising race questions of the larger white world. If initially through the expediency of cheap labour, then in vehement demands for exclusion drawing in international models, the Queensland perspective on race would feed through debate over the three lines or models of influence and challenge some rethinking on the absolute divisions of race and nation.

### **Trans-Pacific model**

By the end of the nineteenth century, then, Australian notions of white superiority were not entirely local in origin. There were strong influences exerted on racial thinking from further afield, and especially from the United States of America. Those American arguments, in large part arising from the pressures to manage issues of slavery and its abolition, and the presence of an extensive black population, brought their own elements into Australian debates, particularly in relation to threats of miscegenation and the social, economic and cultural strains of incorporating large and mobile numbers of unskilled workers in an increasingly industrial economy. The influence of this international racial ‘science’ meant that Australians regarded the 1923 tour in terms very different to the ways in which they had once regarded the Chinese on the goldfields or in specific industries. By the 1920s, the issues raised by a commitment to White Australia, and by anti-Chinese sentiment, encompassed wider national, social and economic concerns.

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<sup>5</sup> Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, 41.



With regard to the USA, it was not only California that was studied, but the problem Americans noted in general of the south and its African-American population. By Federation, Australian interest in these issues was guided by the works of Charles Pearson and James Bryce. Their books, *National Life and Character: A Forecast* and *The American Commonwealth*, respectively, related concerns with any mixing of the white race with the coloured. Both texts discussed the problems of the non-white races, their over-population, and the need to limit their expansion into lands decreed as white by virtue of the advance of modern colonisation and the promise of economic development and productive transformation. Australia's vast open spaces, Pearson warned, must become attractive to other countries, with their surplus populations, unless measures were taken to ensure that no large scale migration of coloured people meant that the continent became just another example where the 'white man may soon be cramped for land'.<sup>6</sup> Arguments such as this continued to appeal to Australian parliamentarians when they formulated the policies of White Australia.

In addition to the threat of immigration, there was also the more visual fear of miscegenation. From this perspective, Australian parliamentarians did not want to make a mistake similar to that of the United States in dealing with its Negro population in the wake of the Civil War. Prior to the war, two schools of thought prevailed among American racialists. Those most radical were for the integration of the free black 'who would make a special and valuable contribution to national life and character'. The more conservative were of the view that the Negroes should return to Africa and resisted any proposal of black participation in American society. They 'harboured the image of a future America that would be all white, or mainly so'.<sup>7</sup> Abraham Lincoln fell

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<sup>6</sup> Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 37 (see intro., n. 6).

<sup>7</sup> George M Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 130.

into the second category, and debates both about race in America at the time and about Lincoln's racial attitudes provided for much fuel for discussion in Australia.<sup>8</sup>

These debates were surveyed by Bryce who discussed America's need for the right kind of people for its growth. As Bryce argued, the liberation of the African-American population of the south had become a problem for all governments in the united nation. By the end of the nineteenth century the Negroes constituted 'the poorest and socially lowest stratum'.<sup>9</sup> The fear was not primarily how to deal with the coloured population in the south, but what to do with them when they migrated to the more prosperous north. The problem was of race dilution, the low-caste Negroes mingling with the British and European whites. Bryce summed up the situation in the United States in no uncertain terms.

The peculiar feature of the race problem as it presents itself in the United States is, that the negroes are in many districts one-third or even one-half of the population, are forced to live in the closest contiguity with the whites, and are for the purposes of industry indispensable to the latter, yet are so sharply cut off from the whites by colour and all that colour means, that not merely a mingling of blood, but any social approximation, is regarded with horror, and perpetual severance is deemed a law of nature.<sup>10</sup>

To Australian parliamentarians, this prognosis had an eerie similarity to what they feared may happen if the Chinese were to be allowed to immigrate. Not specifically the Chinese question in California, but the problem of the Negroes was echoed in Australian parliaments when race was brought into discussion. Australians, too, feared possible miscegenation with the Chinese and the dilution of all that their new nation stood for.

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<sup>8</sup> George M Fredrickson, *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Integrity* (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 54-56.

<sup>9</sup> James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*. Vol. 2. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), 514.

<sup>10</sup> Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, Vol 2. 533.

Pearson, a migrant to Australia from England in 1864 and a parliamentarian in the Berry government of Victoria in 1878, also acknowledged the concerns of White Australia.<sup>11</sup> He had travelled to the USA in 1868 where he surveyed the land and race situation of that country and professed that '(l)and in the temperate zone was limited: white men might soon be denied the chance to emigrate'.<sup>12</sup> This thesis, sometimes termed 'the white man under siege', provided the basis for the opening chapter of *National Life and Character: A Forecast*. The possibility of Chinese expansion was part of this concern. Pearson also foresaw the coming independence of 'coloured races' as inevitable<sup>13</sup> and thus believed they would become a 'serious competitor for the empire'. As Pearson warned, the colonisation of the Straits Settlements of South East Asia showed 'what the race is capable of'.<sup>14</sup> He noted that the 'general law is that the lower race increases faster than the higher' and from that perspective the possibility of being swamped by black and yellow races, once allowed into a national population, was inevitable.<sup>15</sup> Only Australia, through its vigilant opposition, had kept the Chinese from becoming a power on its continent. And thus when it came to consolidate these colonial Acts, at the time of the first Commonwealth parliament, Prime Minister Edmund Barton quoted from Pearson to support the measures that comprised the White Australia policy – the *Immigration Restriction Act* and the *Pacific Islands Labourers' Act*.

Barton chose one of Pearson's chapter conclusions to re-enforce his argument. He stated that the globe would be circled by the black and yellow races and that it was inevitable that white races, and specifically Australians, 'shall wake to find ourselves elbowed and hustled, and perhaps even thrust aside by peoples whom we looked down

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<sup>11</sup> John M Tregenza, "Pearson, Charles Henry (1830 - 1894)," Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A050471b.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 36.

<sup>13</sup> Marilyn Lake, "The White Man under Siege: New Histories of Race in the Nineteenth Century and the Advent of White Australia," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 58 (2004): 51.

<sup>14</sup> Charles H. Pearson, *National Life and Character: A Forecast* 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1893), 31.

<sup>15</sup> Pearson, *National Life and Character*, 32.

upon as servile and thought of as bound always to minister to our needs'.<sup>16</sup> The Acts were Australia's chance to prevent this invasion.

Theodore Roosevelt, the soon-to-be President of the United States, was also intrigued by Pearson's work and in 1893 published a review of his book. Roosevelt was a proponent of the white man owning the warm, yet not tropical, parts of the world. He wrote 'Nineteenth century democracy needs no more complete vindication for its existence than the fact that it has kept for the white race the best portions of the new world's surface, temperate America and Australia'.<sup>17</sup> The two countries were the last bastions of white freedom. Thus, the project of White Australia 'took shape in response to a new global history', one that 'chartered the population growth, migrations and political advancement of different races of men'.<sup>18</sup>

These trans-national notions of race played a role not only within the development of Australian colonial government's restrictive policies against the Chinese, or in the creation of the eventual Act that would bring these attitudes their power and legitimisation, but also in informing a very broadly held consensus on such issues. A more sophisticated approach to these questions was explored by parliamentarians such as Alfred Deakin and Henry Parkes, who believed that Australia's federal fathers should learn from American history. They understood the consequences of Chinese settlement within Australia, using the challenges faced by the United States as a foundation for presenting what might befall Australia. These Australian leaders heeded Bryce's warning of the racial problems which confronted America as one of the great secular problems of the world. They also noted Pearson's concerns about the inevitable invasion of coloured races. The White Australia policy had its foundations in such

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<sup>16</sup> Pearson, *National Life and Character*, 89-90.

<sup>17</sup> Lake and Reynolds, *White Man*, 101 quoting from Roosevelt's review of Pearson's book.

<sup>18</sup> Lake and Reynolds, *White Man*, 58.

thinking and Australia had drawn its 'colour line' - a line which remained firmly ensconced in policy and culture in the first decades of Federation.

### **Trans-Tasman discussions**

Following World War I, however, there developed a more significant emphasis on security. Established views on the racial questions had to accommodate considerations of Australia's position with the East. Could such a blunt instrument as the exclusion of the 'servile' continue to serve the interests of a new nation facing the economic as well as strategic challenges of its 'Pacific' region? This shift beyond Federation notions of racial exclusion affected both Australia and New Zealand. The question of Chinese immigration was not demoted, but that the rise of Japan as a stronger power in the Pacific placed it at a level that called for fresh debates in the two Antipodean countries. Yet it also brought to the fore the main debates in New Zealand which saw Australia as its first line of defence against the Asians. Thus a trans-Tasman focus emerged in discussions which took place in New Zealand, and while New Zealand did not face the same anxieties and issues as Australia, it was keen that Australia hold the line on the racial integrity of the white Dominions. New Zealand newspapers brought out this trans-Tasman conversation as it delved into the archives of Australian racism. For Henry Millard, as we shall discover in the next chapter, these trans-Tasman discussions formed his awareness of racial issues and would influence his objectives in instigating the tour of 1923.

Post World War I Australasian newspapers hosted lengthy debates on the two questions of race and security and how both issues were seen, either separately or together, as a threat to the notion of a balanced and healthy white society in the South Pacific. The papers allowed not only the journalists and editors to advance their arguments, but also for an extensive coverage of the views of politicians and academics. Further, these

papers often took different sides in the debates, creating a more open conversation about key topics and resisting any sense of an easy consensus on key issues. In these ways, race and racial exclusion became part of a vigorous public discourse and part of the day-to-day environment in which Millard, as a journalist worked and sought advancement. The primary arguments canvassed in these debates related to the northern areas of Australia, its security, its need to be populated and whether this should be by white or coloured settlers. For some New Zealanders, their major concern was that if Australia allowed coloured races into the north, it would be inevitable that the colour line would slowly move south until the whole nation was invaded and hence there would be no impediment for the migratory onslaught of coloured races to cross the Tasman.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, by the 1920s, the debates focused on the breaching of the natural barrier that existed north of the continent, between the Dutch East Indies and northern Australia. The security of Australasia was at stake. Japan was becoming a stronger threat, through its dominance in the Pacific. It had defeated both China and Russia prior to World War I and annexed a number of the German Pacific holdings. Japan was also described as the 'sword of Asia' and 'capable of meeting on equal terms one of the great Powers of the West'.<sup>20</sup> Together, Australasians thus considered themselves 'uncomfortably close' to any possible future clash between East and West, 'which would inevitably draw the Commonwealth into its maelstrom'.<sup>21</sup> The complexity of the East Asia situation meant Australia's involvement was inevitable. To Japan's chagrin, William Morris Hughes, Australia's Prime Minister, even went as far to ensure that no 'racial equality' clause was inserted into the League of Nations charter at the end of World War I.<sup>22</sup> Thus,

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<sup>19</sup> "White Australia," *Auckland Star*, 28 June, 1922.

<sup>20</sup> Fleetwood Chidell, *Australia - White or Yellow* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1926), 109.

<sup>21</sup> "Australia and the Pacific," *Observer*, 23 June, 1923.

<sup>22</sup> John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie*, 157 (see intro., n. 5).

Hughes had created a justification to withhold entry to Australia to all races, whether Chinese or Japanese.

As New Zealand papers debated, the solution to the security problem lay with the populating of the northern parts of Australia. They followed initiatives such as the Sydney-based Northern Australia White Settlement Association, which was founded on the principle that the 'peopling of its great northern area is the greatest and most urgent of Australia's problems',<sup>23</sup> and was an outcome 'of the patriotic enthusiasm of Major General W. L'Estrange Eames', a medical practitioner and soldier.<sup>24</sup> While, the association was unsuccessful in its aims, it gave a clear message to many that concern in the defence of the country was creeping steadily south, and inevitably raised issues of population purity.

There was also an Imperial dimension in relation to these Australian and New Zealand debates about populating the north as Britain was suffering large post-war unemployment. The Australian States became ports to ship some of this excess, and in doing so the migration helped the expanding industrial Dominions and 'strengthen(ed) communities that are British in institutions and spirit, and extend British trade'.<sup>25</sup> The Antipodean countries discussed this matter with urgency - New Zealand observing the proceedings of the Australian governments - as it related to the above issues of populating the north, keeping the lands white and providing more reliable men for the defence of the Antipodes, if the need arose. New Zealand thus also needed 'her share of Britain's surplus stock' and had to follow the lead of the Australian States.<sup>26</sup> Eventually,

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<sup>23</sup> The North Australian White Settlement Association, *People the North* (Sydney: The North Australian White Settlement Association, 1922), 1.

<sup>24</sup> The North Australian White Settlement Association, 2; D.M. Horner, *Eames, William L'Estrange (1863-1956)* Vol. 8, Australian Dictionary of Biography (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1981), 399-400.

<sup>25</sup> "Surplus Population," *Auckland Star*, 10 April, 1922.

<sup>26</sup> "The New Immigration," *New Zealand Herald*, 15 March, 1922.

in May 1922, the British Parliament gave Royal Assent to the Empire Settlement Act to instigate the proceedings of migration.<sup>27</sup>

With this in mind, the debates then turned to the composition of the population of the north. The security of the Antipodean nations relied on the right kind of people who resided at the northern boundary of Australia. While Hughes was adamant that this would not be by the coloured nations,<sup>28</sup> others chose to disagree. Discussion on this topic became more pronounced in the early 1920s. Northern Australia was not part of the temperate zones that Roosevelt prescribed were suitable for white races, and regarded by some as unsuitable for white settlement. The question among those involved in these discussions was whether white labour could survive in the tropics or that tropical or indentured coloured labour would be required. The Chinese were already living in the Northern Territory and had shown their ability to perform the work required, yet others were more concerned with the control of migration to the south, echoing Bryce's discussion of the Negroes of the American South.<sup>29</sup>

At this time Australia was also involved in a more scientific analysis of race and the development of a better nation. A movement developed, through the work of Morris Miller, to study mental hygiene and deficiency of young individuals to control problems such as juvenile delinquency.<sup>30</sup> It became part of what was known as the eugenics movement and involved a number of academics and medical practitioners.

The Chinese in Australia, whether of lower or middle class employment, did not fit with the approval of the emerging eugenic movement in Australia, dealing as it did with 'the

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<sup>27</sup> United Kingdom, *Hansard HC Debates*, 31 May, 1922 vol. 154 cc 2182-3.

<sup>28</sup> "Northern Australia," *New Zealand Herald*, 31 May, 1922; "White Australia Policy," *New Zealand Herald*, 1 June, 1922.

<sup>29</sup> Alan Powell, *Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988),

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Garton, "Sound Minds and Healthy Bodies: Re-Considering Eugenics in Australia, 1914-1940," *Australian Historical Studies* 26, no. 103 (1994): 170.



construction of a national body and the problems with it'. By the 1920s, the study of the body had become commonplace amongst the medical and scientific fraternity who 'were recommending governance within an ostensibly physiological, and therefore racial, framework'.<sup>31</sup> The request was for Australians to improve their race by improving the body of the young. Yet when the discussion arose of who would perform the labour in the north, these eugenics debates were strangely absent from the discussions.

The argument was instead directed towards whether to allow the tropical labour into northern Australia based on ideas that they could perform the tasks that whites were considered unable to do. The *Auckland Star*, for example, keenly reported the contention put forward by Sir Henry Barwell, the South Australian Premier, that

the people of Australia and the Empire must recognise that it is impossible to leave the tropical portions of Australia empty much longer; and that it is equally impossible to populate them with whites because the white races must invariably suffer physical degeneration and decay if they attempt to exist under tropical conditions.<sup>32</sup>

Barwell insisted that white labour was unable to harvest the great resources of the North and that, in his opinion, 'these cannot be developed without tropical labour'. Further, Barwell stated, 'Australia must be developed, for the great empty spaces are undoubtedly a menace to Australia, and incidentally, New Zealand'.<sup>33</sup> Barwell was opting for a Mediterranean development of the north. He envisaged people from the "tropical" European countries of Italy and Malta to be employed in Australia's north.

American newspapers, though, misunderstood Barwell's definition of tropical labour, believing it included Chinese and Japanese. While the *New Zealand Herald* allowed Barwell to refute these beliefs, by reprinting a *New York Sun* article the paper had

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<sup>31</sup> Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness* 155 (see intro., n. 7).

<sup>32</sup> "The Colour Line," *Auckland Star*, 24 January, 1922.

<sup>33</sup> "White Australia," *New Zealand Herald*, 10 July, 1922.

opened the minds of its readers to other possible solutions for the northern Australian question.<sup>34</sup> Only two months prior, the *New Zealand Herald* had reproduced the thoughts of Griffith-Taylor that ‘it would be well to compromise on the colour question and admit Indian and Chinese for domestic service otherwise they would never get the white women to go there’.<sup>35</sup>

These were the concerns debated in the New Zealand press. *The New Zealand Herald* was open to alternatives presented by Barwell, Griffith-Taylor and others. The choice by Australia for a pure white continent was still one of contention. Yet *the Auckland Star* was more explicit in its thoughts on the matter. The editor, in echoing Pearson, stated:

The White Australia policy involves not only the future of Australia, but the future of civilisation and the prospects of the white races throughout the world. Experience has proven that the unrestricted competition of cheap labour inevitably lowers the standard of living for white workers and reduces them to a hopeless state of industrial and social degradation; while the moral effects of the introduction of alien elements into a white community – implying differences in social habits and standards of conduct – have always been disastrous wherever the experiment has been made. If Oriental labour, indentured or not, is once admitted into the Northern Territory, it must be only a question of time before the whole Continent would be submerged by “the rising tide of colour”; and what will happen in Australia must infallibly happen elsewhere if this precedent is once established, and the white races decide no longer to “draw the colour line.”<sup>36</sup>

New Zealanders were very interested in the proceedings of the populating of northern Australia. Their heated participation in the discussion of another country’s concerns showed their own anxiety of what may happen to New Zealand. This trans-Tasman deliberation of Australian matters continued through to the inception of the tour and affected the proponents of the tour.

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<sup>34</sup> “Sir H. Barwell’s ‘Policy’,” *New Zealand Herald*, 10 July, 1922.

<sup>35</sup> “Tropical Australia,” *New Zealand Herald*, 12 May, 1922.

<sup>36</sup> “The Colour Line,” *Auckland Star*, 18 March, 1922.

The options put forward by the likes of Griffith-Taylor and reproduced in the *New Zealand Herald* would be echoed during the tour and again within an economic and industrial context. Yet, as the editor of the *Auckland Star* stated, the introduction of cheap labour will affect the fabric of the economy. Australia and New Zealand were emerging countries which sought to protect their borders, not only from the obsequious Chinese but against the range of strategic challenges intensifying after World War I, and also needing to maintain and build their fledgling economies.

### **Imperial connections in Asia**

Australia had its American interests and its trans-national and post World War I influences, but sitting underneath all of this was a deeply unresolved Imperial discontent. Following the war, Australia had been independently represented at the Treaty of Versailles, separately from the British delegation. Hughes had secured this independence by arguing that his country had fought in the war to the effect of ‘600 000 dead’ for its own national safety and to insure its national integrity.<sup>37</sup> Thus post-war Australian ties with Britain had to adjust to the changes wrought in an Asia-Pacific region specifically – a region increasingly dominated by Japan and the USA. At the 1921 Imperial Conference in London, Hughes had fought for the retention of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance so that he could use Britain to control Japanese interests in the Pacific. Yet, Hughes also made sure that if Britain was incapable of defending Australia, he could rely on the USA.<sup>38</sup> Australia’s allegiance with Britain, at least politically, remained intact, yet from the late nineteenth century, the strength of this connection began to wane. Britain and Australia both had interests in Asia, but their

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<sup>37</sup> Manning Clark, *A Short History of Australia* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1964), 210.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Spertalis, *The Diplomatic Battles of Billy Hughes* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger 1983), 219-229.

differences were expanding and when the soccer tour was in full swing, discussions relating to these differences came to the fore.

Australia's concerns with Britain and its development of trade with Asia became significant in the late nineteenth century. These concerns also, indirectly, played an important role in the development of the *Immigration Restriction Act*. Australia challenged the treaties that Britain had with the Asian countries as they countered the immigration restrictions that the Australian colonies were trying to enforce. Britain's insistence on the Australian colonies accepting the treaties it had with China and Japan led to a galvanising of the colonies in opposition to the treaties and provided another reason for the federation of the colonies.

There was a tension in Australia with the British Imperial way of seeing the world. Empire areas of co-operation extended to China, India and Japan up until the 1930s, driven by economic interests. Yet for the colonies and the emerging Commonwealth, there was a heightened racist anxiety precisely because of fears of economic as well as racial competition. While Britain was trading with its Asian partners, Australia was causing them concerns through their restrictive policies. Equally, Britain was concerned that the offence arising from restrictive immigration policies would affect their trade with the ports in Asia.

In 1860 the Peking Convention provided for the recruitment of coolies<sup>39</sup> and thus their emigration to British Colonies. When Queensland tried to gain Royal assent for the restriction of Chinese to migrate, the British government rejected the Bill on the basis of the Peking Convention. The British did not want to alter their trade relationship with the Chinese based on the requests for restrictive legislation by the colonies. They felt that all Chinese should be able to enter all Dominions without restrictions. This was

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<sup>39</sup> C. Y. Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975), 18.

extended when in 1894 the Commerce and Navigation Treaty was signed by Britain and Japan. The treaty gave the Japanese 'full liberty to enter, travel or reside in any part of the dominions'<sup>40</sup> which in turn meant the Japanese were allowed to migrate to Australia as well. This provision led to the Australian premiers extending the restriction on Chinese to all Asians.<sup>41</sup>

The effect of Australia's reaction to the British trade agreements with the Asian nations was to place Australia further away from becoming a strong trade partner with these same Asians. The culmination of the *Immigration Restriction Act* meant that overseas Asian merchantmen were unable to migrate to Australia to carry out trade with their home country. In 1906, from a report by J. B. Suttor, Australian commissioner to the East based in Kobe, the estimated percentage of imports by China from Australia compared to all imports was a 'calamity' of barely a quarter of one percent.<sup>42</sup> This would improve little over the next decades leading to the 1920s when a trade commissioner was sent to China in an attempt to rectify the problem.

Australia's trade with China was further affected, post Federation, by the imposition of tariffs on imports with the aim to protect the small manufacturers. Farmers were also protected, as were industrial workers through the arbitration system and welfare entitlements. The development of the living wage completed the protection of Australian industry on all fronts.<sup>43</sup> The argument against free trade was strong as Australia was looking to promote economic welfare. These arguments sealed Australia into an Imperial contract: for the supply of raw products in the pastoral, agricultural and

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<sup>40</sup> H. H. Almond Jr, "The Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1964): 943.

<sup>41</sup> Persia Crawford Campbell, *Chinese Coolie Emigration*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1971), 75.

<sup>42</sup> Eric Rolls, *Citizens: Flowers and the Wide Sea* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1996), 453.

<sup>43</sup> Ray Markey, "Populist Politics: Racism and Labor in NSW 1880-1900," in *Who Are Our Enemies? Racism and the Australian Working Class*, ed. Ann Curthoys and Andrew Markus (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger Pty Ltd, 1978), 78.

mining sectors Australia gained access to manufactured goods and a remarkably high standard of living.<sup>44</sup> For China, which had cheap labour to service the manufacturing industries but no access to the Australian market, it meant an imbalance of trade and less of a reliance on Australia's products as imports.

The Australian Chinese, though, refused to remain without voice. Representing both themselves as merchantmen, and the general Chinese community, both the Melbourne and Sydney Chinese Chambers of Commerce, prior to 1920, had petitioned the government on numerous occasions to ease the discriminatory immigration restrictions, yet without success.<sup>45</sup> They formed a national organisation with numerous branches around the country, yet even with support from the Chinese papers and the Consul General, it came to nothing. The middle-class Chinese merchantmen, though, recognised that there was a need to bring Australian Chinese together as one. One effect of the campaign was to help galvanise the Chinese 'to acquire a community and a national spirit, and so to strengthen their ties with the Chinese communities'.<sup>46</sup>

The Chinese-Australia business leaders again showed initiative towards the end of that second decade. They created the China-Australia Mail Steamship Line over the summer of 1917-18 in response to the high freight costs on the Japanese-registered shipping lines. During World War I all Australian-owned vessels were requisitioned for the war effort thus leaving a monopoly in the hands of unscrupulous Japanese traders. The initiative was unsuccessful, the company terminating business in 1924, yet it demonstrated that during this period Chinese businessmen in Australia, unable to alter

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<sup>44</sup>Karl Anderson, "Protection and the Historical Situation: Australia," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 53, no. 1 (1938): 92.

<sup>45</sup>Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie*, 186.

<sup>46</sup>C. F. Yong, *The New Gold Mountain: The Chinese in Australia 1901-1921* (Richmond, SA: Raphael Arts, 1977), 222.

the Australian restrictive policies, searched for other methods to develop healthier trade relations with China.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, by the 1920s and the time of the soccer tour, trade relations between the burgeoning Chinese republic and Australia were poor. Even with the westernisation of parts of China, there was little effect on the exports from Australia of the plentiful supply of wheat and wool to China. Australian traders, emerging from the war were enthusiastic to open their products to the Chinese market and Chinese merchants were also looking to create a favourable commercial environment between the two countries. Yet, Australian tariffs, White Australia and its immigration restrictions hindered the ability for these to eventuate. Australian trade, also, was still constrained by strong Imperial ties, half of their exports going to Britain in 1920-21 year.<sup>48</sup> Australia was unable to negotiate the problem of balancing trade with the race question, a concern that Millard would take up with earnest as the tour progressed.

### **Australian public thinking**

Australian attitudes toward East Asia, by the early 1920s, were drawing on a number of key influences. Parliamentarians had become involved in a trans-Pacific exchange of ideas that extended beyond the Chinese question in California to that of the broader American concerns of the African-American population in the south and the issues of miscegenation. The open spaces of northern Australia drew in a conversation, in both Australia and New Zealand, relating, within an Asia-Pacific context, to who was to populate and protect this northern border of the continent. This discussion was also affected by the political manoeuvring of William Morris Hughes, following World War I, as he created a way to manage the potentially dangerous Japanese empire. Yet,

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<sup>47</sup> Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie*, 186-7.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Cochrane, *Industrialisation and Dependence* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), 41.

Australians were still within the umbrella of the British empire and were affected by its own Imperial ideas of racial inclusion which countered the policies of White Australia, and which created economic imbalances as Australia tried to move into an industrial engagement in the region in trade and manufacturing.

The debates relating to trans-national thinking, whether it be from the United States of America, New Zealand or Great Britain, steadily created extensive public interest in these issues, separately and as a synthesis of issues, by 1923. The debates from Parliamentary chambers and scientific journals made their way into the public sphere of the newspapers, pamphlets and meetings, and developed a vigorous, well-informed public interest in the national and international dimensions of Australia's health and security. Thus as the 1920s commenced, these concerns about racial purity were no longer the domain of the politician and academic, or of jingoistic nationalism, but there was a broad public exposure to them on a day to day basis. When the Chinese soccer players arrived, these issues were given additional attention. This depth of public engagement was exactly the kind of environment Millard was hoping to secure in first conceiving the idea of a touring Chinese soccer team..



## CHAPTER 2

### Evolution of the Tour

#### Introduction

In the early 1920s China, torn apart by different forces, was continuing its search for an identity. The many warlords were vying for power, some supported by other countries, while pirates and robbers went about their business unopposed. Amidst this, an Australian, Henry Millard, attempted to gather a group of sportsmen, physical specimens, to take to Australia and New Zealand to contest battles on the sporting fields. His aim was to open the eyes of Australasians to a different type of Chinese, one that displayed a less prejudiced image to that found in the two Antipodean countries. His interest was founded in war-torn France of 1917.

The journey Millard was to take involved numerous obstacles. The varying organisations he came in contact with in China would push their own aims for the type of representation of China each envisaged. For Millard to put together his team of sportsmen, his eventual task would be to find a compromise between these conflicting forces, yet also one that may fulfil, at least in part, his own initial aims.

Millard chose sport because it displayed physicality and competitiveness. Few Chinese participated in sport in Australia and New Zealand. Their physique was considered poor and unable to weather the strains of physical and competitive games. Thus the idea of a Chinese sports tour gained interest from both investors and sporting bodies. Millard had been advised by a prominent Chinese businessman of the fact that there were athletes in China who played rugby union. He convinced investors to finance a venture to find these athletes in China and thus began his adventure.

## **Conception of a Chinese sport tour**

Henry “Harry” Alfred Millard was born in Ballarat, Victoria in December 1888. Little is known of his schooling, but by 1913 he was living at Greymouth on the western coast of New Zealand’s south island. There he married and had two children. Millard worked as a newspaper publisher, employed by the Grey Star company.<sup>1</sup> When war broke out in 1914, he enlisted with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force as a commissioned officer. He was promoted to Second Lieutenant in March 1915.<sup>2</sup> In New Zealand his position was as an instructor, but Millard was eager to get to Europe to be part of the main war effort. In early 1917 he joined the New Zealand base of Sling Camp, located on the Salisbury Plains, Wiltshire, England. It was not until June that year that Millard made it to the field, via Étapes in France, where he was posted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. Millard lasted barely a month at the battle field as a pre-existing condition of ‘hammer-toes’<sup>3</sup> was exacerbated at the front and within a month required him to return from the field, unable to march. In France he was transferred to Rouen and then back to Étapes. It was in these French cities that Millard came in contact with the Labour Corps.

Brought into France to assist with the loading and unloading of ships and any other work behind the lines, the Labour Corps was composed of British, Chinese, African, British West Indies, Egyptian and Fijian labourers. It was the Chinese that Millard particularly noticed. These Chinese labourers had arrived in France from July 1916 through an agreement, the Hui Min contract, between France and China. Six months later, the British followed the French initiative, employing their own battalions of

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<sup>1</sup> NZEF: Attestation of Henry Alfred Millard, 27 June 1916; NZEF: Military History Sheet, 7 December 1916.

<sup>2</sup> NZDF: X1a/229, 10 March 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Hammer toe is a deformity of the toe, in which the end of the toe is bent downward. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001235.htm>

Chinese labour.<sup>4</sup> The total number of Chinese labourers who worked for the British numbered just under 100,000.<sup>5</sup> Whereas Millard had been accustomed to think of Chinese in the established Antipodean racial stereotypes, these labourers, so integrated into the war effort, struck a different figure.

The Chinese Labour Corps were selected from the Shandong Province, located between Shanghai and Beijing and chosen for their capacity for substantial physical work. Such a concentrated sample, taken from a nation still marked by distinctive differences in population across regions, meant they were more readily associated with a particular physical type, especially given the highly racialised perspectives of the time. In his 1924 treatise *The Races of Man and their Distribution*, for example, Arthur Haddon had noted that in the north, the Chinese 'are said to be taller, with a tendency to mesocephaly; indeed a Khams Tibetan element has been noted, the face is longer and the skin lighter'. The image that most Australians had, as a result of gold-rush and post gold-rush immigration, were of southern Chinese. Of these Haddon had noticed in 'the south a Pareocean element has darkened the skin, broadened the head and shortened the stature'.<sup>6</sup> This figure conformed to the prevailing stereotype. In this contrast lies many of the elements of intention, selection and perception that would influence the concept and reality of the tour.

Millard was struck by the competence of these Chinese, evident in terms of their physical capacity and their co-ordinated contribution to the Allied war effort. Even the Australian Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes, who took a strong racial stance throughout his term of office, and most notably at the Versailles Peace Conference, had

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Summerskill, *China on the Western Front: Britain's Chinese Work Force in the First World War* (London: Michael Summerskill, 1982), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Fawcett, "The Chinese Labour Corps in France 1917-1921," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 40 (2000): 50.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur C. Haddon, *The Races of Man and Their Distribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 106.

to allow that those supporting the valiant calling of war must be exempted from usual preconceptions. The workers of the Labour Corps, he argued, would be ‘men who could stand 12 hours work a day, men whose work was constant and regular. They could not improvise that class of men, it was a question of physique.’<sup>7</sup> Yet Millard’s surprise also lead to dismay as it exposed the stereotype prevailing in New Zealand and Australia of the Chinese as degenerate, a threat to national, racial vitality. What he witnessed in the Chinese Labour Corps seemed to prove this stereotype to be false. And from this perception, for a range of factors that are both largely unrecorded and a complex mix in themselves, stemmed the resolve that would eventually lead to the 1923 tour.

One aspect of this complexity is that the extent of Millard’s exposure to the Chinese Labour Corps is itself debatable, as in various articles in Australian newspapers, written while he and the Chinese were in Australia in late 1923, he made inconsistent assertions, including that he was in charge of a company of Chinese labourers near the front. There is little evidence to justify most of these statements, especially since Millard’s time in France was very short, from 22 June 1917 to 15 August 1917.<sup>8</sup> Thus, based on records of Millard’s travels, his exposure to the Chinese Labour Corps would have been limited to a mere eleven days, on his way to the front and upon returning, made up of seven in June and four in August. To have reached the conclusions he later asserted and his idea for the 1923 tour within such a short period of time, begs the question of Millard’s motivations - from the altruist to the entrepreneurial - which remain difficult to answer.

Even without conclusive evidence, the narrative that Millard presents in the newspaper columns throughout the instigation, planning and conduct of the tour, is enough to support his assertion that he spent sufficient time with the Chinese Labour Corps to

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<sup>7</sup> Summerskill, *China on the Western Front*, 23.

<sup>8</sup> NZDF: Casualty Form Active Service, 30 April 1918.

understand the quality of physical specimen that was before him, and its difference to the stereotypes prevailing in both Australia and New Zealand. On this basis, Millard would claim he sought to dispel the disparaging images prevailing of the Chinese. His intent was to see the Chinese succeed as athletes 'having been influenced by the splendid physique of the Chinese Labour Corps Battalions'.<sup>9</sup> What Millard saw in the Chinese Labour Corps was almost of necessity an impressive group of men. The Chinese, whom his compatriots in Australasia were so disparaging about, were helping the Allies win the war. In this contrast lay the prospect of a major exercise in recasting racial attitudes.

After witnessing the Labour Corps, Millard transferred from hospital to hospital in France and thence to England where his disability was treated. In September 1917, he was classified unfit for general service for at least the following six months. Eventually, in early 1918, he sailed for New Zealand.<sup>10</sup> Arriving in mid-1918, he attempted to resume his position as a military instructor, but his injury precluded this option.<sup>11</sup>

Prevented from any further participation in the war, Millard returned to journalism. With his family having moved to Auckland, he began work for the *Auckland Star*. Through his position with the newspaper, he became involved in a vigorous debate over issues of racial restriction that was taking place with journalists of the rival paper, the *New Zealand Herald*. These papers at the time were hosting an exchange of ideas about China, where one paper tended to take a more favourable view of China and the Chinese to the other. These debates exposed Millard to the different positions held about the arguments that led to the *Immigration Restriction Amendment Act* (1920).<sup>12</sup> Millard participated in these debates, and they allowed him an opportunity to profess his

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<sup>9</sup> "Soccer Tour of Australia by Chinese Athletes will be Supported all over the Country," *China Press*, 2 February, 1923.

<sup>10</sup> NZDF: Casualty Form Active Service, 30 April 1918.

<sup>11</sup> NZDF: Proceedings of a Medical Board, 7 May 1918, Memo, 24 May 1918.

<sup>12</sup> T. D. H. Hall, "Status of Aliens in New Zealand," *Pacific Affairs* 4, no. 8 (1931), 705.

beliefs about alternative perceptions of the Chinese he had witnessed in France a few years earlier. He was to advocate 'for the opportunity to be given the Chinese to establish themselves'.<sup>13</sup>

Although Millard was involved in the debates surrounding race and restriction in New Zealand, his main position increasingly centred on sports reporting and in the early 1920s he became an established sports journalist. It would seem that when a proposed Great Britain rugby league tour for 1923 was postponed, he recognised an opportunity to convert his beliefs into actions. The war, and the post-war period, had in themselves created a heightened atmosphere for the discussion of the issues that had first struck Millard in France, particularly masculinity and all it represented in terms of national standing. Competitive sport was an integral part of this context. According to Imperial thought that carried through to the war, the 'central aims of sport were to show masculine power and domination over an opponent, as well as a competitive spirit'.<sup>14</sup> It was Millard's belief that if he could assemble a team of Chinese who could display and accomplish themselves as competitive in a sporting context, he would get the spectators, and thus the general public, to consider an alternative view of the Chinese. That in itself need not be the endpoint, for as Millard was also aware, the post-war context was one in which issues of international economic relations also pressed on racial stereotypes, and needed reconsideration in often different terms of competition and partnership.

### **Converting the idea into a tour**

Millard was not alone in making these connections. The times fostered a fertile combination of these elements, if not always in exactly the same form. In developing

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<sup>13</sup> "Soccer Tour of Australia by Chinese Athletes will be Supported all over the Country," *China Press*, 2 February, 1923.

<sup>14</sup> Daryl Adair, John Nauright, and Murray G. Phillips. "Playing Fields through to Battle Fields: The Development of Australian Sporting Manhood in Its Imperial Context, C. 1850-1918," *Journal of Australian Studies* 56 (1998): 52.

his ideas for a sporting tour, he soon obtained the assistance of the local Chinese community. He established contact with a well-respected Chinese merchantman in the New Zealand Chinese community, Mr Chee Chan Ah. Chee presented a talk in late July 1922 that echoed a number of Millard's perceptions of the Chinese. Chee had just returned from a ten month trip to China, a country he had not visited for 13 years. He stated that, through the influence of Sun Yatsen, western ideas had been assimilated into Chinese culture. Dress, education, sanitation and working conditions had all altered along western lines.<sup>15</sup> While not expressing a difference in physicality, Chee argued that the Chinese were absorbing western ideals and culture. These Chinese, he professed, countered the generalised perceptions that existed in New Zealand, and Australia.

Millard took Chee's arguments on board. If the Chinese had altered their ways in tune with western ideals, he considered, and thus discussed with Chee, whether they had also taken to western sports. Millard knew that the Chinese were physically capable but was uncertain if they participated in the sports that to westerners expressed physicality and masculinity. Through his association with Chee, it seems that Millard was seeking proof that the Chinese participated in these types of sport, and thus whether a touring team could present an accessible image of Chinese physical capacity. To dispel the stereotypes of racial inferiority, it was important to obtain the best players which represented this physicality, and in a sport at which the Chinese could stand shoulder to shoulder with New Zealand players. And it would also be important to attract, and possibly offer benefits to, investors in such a concept.

In early October, Chee provided Millard with the evidence that he required by tying together Chinese education and employment capabilities, with representations of their ability to participate in a physical sport, rugby union, that was well-recognised by the

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<sup>15</sup> "Modern China," *New Zealand Herald*, 24 July, 1922.

New Zealand public. In a series of articles appearing in both Auckland papers, Chee stated that Chinese, living in Hong Kong, played rugby union and were ‘mostly students and young fellows engaged in office work who were associated with the Y.M.C.A.’. These footballers, Chee confirmed, ‘had demonstrated their prowess on foreign fields’ with successful tours to California and the Strait Settlements.<sup>16</sup> Further, Chee explained the ‘Chinese players would ... compare favourably with the New Zealand footballers in physique’. Chee thus assessed that there were Chinese who could meet face-to-face with Europeans on a sporting arena. These were educated young men who fitted into the Sun Yatsen image of the new China. These ‘young men who played the game were of good standing and belonged to the advanced school of Chinese who had assimilated the most progressive ideas of Western civilisation’.<sup>17</sup> Such a tour of sportsmen would be not only a novelty, but a challenge to prejudice.

Realising a sports tour would need considerable financial backing, Millard identified rugby league as the only code that would be in a position to provide such support. Rugby league, as opposed to rugby union, was a partially professionalised sport in New Zealand at this time and on that basis would attract the resources to provide financial backing for a tour. With this message, Millard began to persuade New Zealand businessmen to form a syndicate to back the venture. The eventual backers knew that the difference between rugby league and rugby union was not overly significant, and thus the proposition to change from union rules to league appeared feasible. Further, the backers would have had the idea that a tour of Chinese sportsmen would gain interest from a public already highly sensitive to the debate in local newspapers relating to the basis of immigration restriction.

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<sup>16</sup> Rugby was played in California amongst the Colleges in the early twentieth century. The 1905 New Zealand rugby team, the All Blacks, travelled through California on their way home from Europe. In Sydney, the *Referee* had a number of articles about rugby in California. See, for example, *Referee*, 8 November, 1911.

<sup>17</sup> “Chinese Footballers,” *New Zealand Herald*, 9 October, 1922.



This debate, Millard also knew, extended to Australia, and in Australia he intended to use the same reasoning to attract the New South Wales Rugby League (NSWRL) authorities to support the extension of the tour to Australia. Yet to the NSWRL, the proposal of a Chinese rugby league tour drew such early enthusiasm that they were willing to put forward money towards it and provide not only the coach to convert the Chinese rugby players, but also paid up the fidelity bonds to the 'Collector of Customs as a guarantee that each man will return to China after the completion of the tour'.<sup>18</sup> The enthusiasm of the NSWRL was driven by the need to fill the gap created when the British chose not to tour. It went with the idea of Chinese playing rugby league, its novelty and possible financial gains.



Shaw and Cubitt (standing left to right) with Millard sitting.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> "Chinese Footballers," *Sun*, 19 October, 1922,.

<sup>19</sup> "Chinese Footballers," *Sun*, 24 November, 1922,.

The coach proposed for the venture was Les Cubitt, the original captain of the 1921-22 Australian rugby league tour of Great Britain.<sup>20</sup> Cubitt only played four matches on that tour, but his position within the rugby league community was strong and he was considered by the NSWRL as a worthy coach to develop and convert a group of Chinese rugby union players. Cubitt's pedigree was second to none. He entered the rugby arena at the age of 12, representing New South Wales (NSW) at schoolboy level only two years later. When Cubitt turned 18 he was already playing first grade rugby league in Sydney with the Glebe District Club and that same year, 1911, gained his first international cap representing Australia. Cubitt's international career culminated in being chosen as captain of the 1921-1922 series in Great Britain.<sup>21</sup> As we will find later, Cubitt's role in this venture would be deeper than initially expected.

Millard enlisted another New Zealand journalist, Jack Shaw, to work with him on the venture. Shaw was to play only a minimal role within the process of selecting the Chinese touring party, yet here was an individual whom we assume, for either altruistic or entrepreneurial reasons, believed he could also benefit from the tour. He would support Millard in China for the initial part of the venture, returning to Australia in February 1923 where his role altered to liaise initially with the Australian soccer authorities and then the New Zealand Football Association.

### **Physicality comes into Question**

Millard was searching for physical specimens to bring back and place on show in Australia and New Zealand. Yet, upon his arrival in Hong Kong with Shaw in mid-December 1922, he found none of the rugby union players he had been told about. For the Chinese in Hong Kong, and elsewhere in China, did play football, but their code

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> "Best Center Three Quarter in Rugger," *China Press*, 4 February, 1923; Alan Whiticker and Glen Hudson, *The Encyclopedia of Rugby League Players* (Sydney: Gary Allen, 2007), 113.

was soccer. Undeterred, Millard's new direction was to convince soccer players, not rugby union players, to play rugby league in a foreign land. Soccer was quite different to rugby league but, with Cubitt on his way to China, Millard recognised that he had to make the best of a poor situation. If Cubitt arrived with nothing to do, the situation would be an embarrassment for Millard back in Australia, and likely an impediment to any potential success of his initial aims.

The problem for Millard was to find the right type of Chinese. They had to be of a physique recognisable to him as similar to those of France and yet also sportsmen who could apply a new set of rules and do so at a level equivalent to the standard played in the Antipodes. 'All we want is a score of fast athletes – not coolies of course – and we shall teach them to play.'<sup>22</sup> Yet this was China, a nation with its own battles, and for someone who appeared out of nowhere with a dream of convincing Chinese to play a foreign sport, in a foreign land, the locals would need a somewhat more convincing argument than to be told that they only need to be fast athletes. For Millard, the press would be his strongest weapon in furthering his aims, and as a journalist, he realised the importance of a voice in the public. That press in Hong Kong would be the *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*. In the opening article describing Millard's proposition, the editor commented that '(a)ccordingly this tour would be a wonderful advertisement for China. It has great opportunities of furthering Chinese-Australian friendship and trade'.<sup>23</sup>

Millard's task appeared even more difficult owing to a heated discussion that took place in the *SCMP* between a number of Australians and New Zealanders who were living in China. The arguments would centre on the physique of Chinese and their ability to perform in a sport known for its physicality. Ironically, the letters penned by these

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<sup>22</sup> "Chinese Rugby Tour," *South China Morning Post*, 28 December, 1922.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

individuals would further Millard's cause instead of countering its as they provided him with the best way of promoting his aims. The *SCMP* encouraged this exchange of ideas and at times the editor also went out of his way to endorse Millard's venture.

The discussion was enthusiastic, yet it also attracted the interest of the educated class of Chinese, those who had learnt English at school and thus could read the *SCMP*. Millard was, in encouraging and participating in this debate, unwittingly directing his comments at these educated Chinese some of whom were also sportsmen. Here, he was tapping into the Chinese bourgeois elites, those who had created the clubs and associations in Hong Kong for 'their own exclusive social world'.<sup>24</sup> Millard had stated that he did not want 'coolies' which meant that he was interested in a more refined type of Chinese who were healthy in physique, but for the debate to exist in an English-language paper, his requirement also included the educated. And there were Chinese in Hong Kong who would have fitted this description. 'By playing the elite British sports ... the Chinese bourgeoisie proved that Chinese too could be respectable, modern gentlemen who could adopt and assimilate British culture.'<sup>25</sup> These were the 'right type of Chinese'.

What these Chinese were reading about themselves was a discussion of their capability to perform on the sporting field. One correspondent, in questioning the ability of Chinese to adapt to such a physical sport, wrote 'Chinese are not made for rugby and cannot be trained to play the game as played in New Zealand and Australia'.<sup>26</sup> The author's blunt forecast for the demise of the project was echoed by others. Yet they also expressed their disbelief that such an enterprise could be considered in the first place,

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<sup>24</sup> Jung-fang Tsai, "History and Identity in Hong Kong: Resisting China's Political Control; Embracing China as the Motherland," *China Review International* 15, no. 1 (2008): 82.

<sup>25</sup> John Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 103-4.

<sup>26</sup> Silver Fern, "Correspondence: Chinese Rugby Team," *South China Morning Post*, 29 December, 1922.

questioning Chee's article from the *New Zealand Herald*.<sup>27</sup> The commentary displays the writers' concerns of ridicule befalling the Australian players when they defeated the Chinese sportsmen, whom these writers considered significantly inferior, by handy margins throughout the tour.

Millard's position was to achieve success. Thus he handled the correspondents with an eagerness that fitted his quest. He emphasised that the Chinese would be equal to White Australians and New Zealanders and physically capable or performing competently on the sporting field. He believed that the negative correspondence 'will act more as an incentive to the personnel of the team to put their best foot forward to answer his slight on their athletic prowess'.<sup>28</sup> Millard was speaking for the Chinese, defending their prowess, yet without knowing exactly who they were. One could surmise a perception that he may have been attempting to draw out these Chinese 'to defend their honour' by attending the trials that he had set up.

The editor of the *SCMP* provided assistance to Millard, but his view was to use the event to improve relations between the two countries. This aim was not one that Millard had considered previously, but one that was to become significant through the tour's development. He contended that it 'must be evident that a tour of this sort, properly handled, would do a great deal to cement Anglo-Chinese friendship and particularly friendship and a greater respect for China in Australia'.<sup>29</sup> The editor, in backing Millard's position, also considered the Chinese were capable of participating in the elite British sports, given they were already contesting football. 'In the view of the real

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<sup>27</sup> Amateur All-Black, "Correspondence: Chinese Rugby Team," *South China Morning Post*, 11 January, 1923.

<sup>28</sup> Henry Millard, "Correspondence: Chinese Rugby Team" *South China Morning Post*, 30 December, 1922.

<sup>29</sup> "Chinese Rugby Tourists," *South China Morning Post*, 17 January, 1923.

aptitude which the Chinese have shown for the Association game, there seems to be no valid reason why they should not shape equally well at rugby football.<sup>30</sup>

In Hong Kong, however, Millard was unable to draw out those who played the Association game to the training field. He realised this before the first possible training session and chose to travel north to Shanghai where he hoped for a better reception with the Chinese there.<sup>31</sup> Cubitt and Shaw were left to view what specimens were to present themselves for the trial at the Queen's College Grounds.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately for the pair, only a 'score or two of young Chinese turned out, but all of small physique and not at all suitable to be pitted against the stalwarts of Australasia'. Those Millard hoped to attract, the soccer players of good physique he had previously witnessed, were uninterested in participating in a different sport. The Editor of the *S.C.M.P.* gave four possible reasons. He believed the Chinese lacked a manly spirit; were shy of travelling to exhibit their prowess; did not realise how the tour would benefit China; and were influenced by an atmosphere of generated suspicion. Millard had not succeeded in obtaining a rugby league team and those who argued against the idea in the local paper were vindicated. The editor, though, had one last suggestion. 'If so, possibly more success would attend an effort to send a soccer team.'<sup>33</sup>

### **Revelation and Representation**

When Millard arrived in Shanghai he became exposed to an organised college system. He noted that the colleges could provide for him the Chinese specimens he required as they were young, educated, virile and similar to the bourgeoisie he came in contact with in Hong Kong. The education system Millard was venturing into was not the centuries old traditional Chinese system, but one reformed following a series of humiliating

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<sup>30</sup> "Chinese Rugby Players," *South China Morning Post*, 30 December, 1922.

<sup>31</sup> "Chinese Rugby Tourists," *South China Morning Post*, 18 January, 1923.

<sup>32</sup> "Chinese Rugby Tourists," *South China Morning Post*, 19 January, 1923.

<sup>33</sup> "Chinese Football Tourists," *South China Morning Post*, 23 January, 1923.

encounters in the mid-nineteenth century. Part of the drive for educational reform came through the need to speak foreign languages and understand modern technology; the need to catch up to the West. Following the Opium Wars, new schools were created that included training in the English language. Those who were exposed to this education system understood Western culture.<sup>34</sup> By the 1920s most colleges and schools were teaching with a strong reliance on English texts. For example, Nanyang College, a state-sponsored university in Shanghai, used English for their readings in engineering and natural sciences.<sup>35</sup>

Sport also played an important role in the development of the individual within the schools and colleges. In the early years of the Republic, the 1910s and 1920s, the concept of the development of the body provided much debate amongst scholars within the Chinese education system. Physical education was analysed in relation to both human physiology and social life.<sup>36</sup> Thus by the time of the selection of the Chinese for the soccer tour of Australia, physical education ‘marked a more sophisticated approach to the relationship between the bodies of Chinese individuals and the Chinese nation’. Further, these Chinese were ‘prepared’ for encounters outside of the realm of China. While the sportsmen had not travelled further afield than other countries in the region, they were sufficiently accustomed to the West through the education system, and also exposed to Westerners from the Treaty ports. The Chinese educated in the schools where Western languages and customs were taught could be expected to ‘represent their country in a worthy manner’.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Deng Peng, *Private Education in Modern China* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 19.

<sup>35</sup> Yeh Wen-Hsin, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China 1919-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Council of East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990), 10-11.

<sup>36</sup> Andrew D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China* (London: University of California Press, 2004), 47.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.* 47-48.

Millard retained the intent to take to Australia a rugby league team and believed he could obtain its nucleus from the college system and specifically, from Nanyang College.<sup>38</sup> There, he had met with the coach of the soccer team, Aleck Leslie, acknowledged by many as a 'miracle man' for what he had done for the College. Nanyang were the best at soccer in Central China and considered stronger than teams from the North. Nanyang confirmed their dominance when they defeated one of the best colleges from the North, Tsinghua College of Beijing, with Millard in attendance. He admired the physical fitness of the Nanyang team and believed that some of their qualities would suit the more physical game of rugby league.<sup>39</sup>

Millard had not learnt from the Hong Kong experience. He continued to offer special treatment for those who would choose to play rugby league, but in doing so he was also viewing the Chinese as a commodity and not people. A conflict still existed between Millard's altruistic aims and his entrepreneurial methodology, and eventually he realised that to obtain Chinese sportsmen to travel to Australia and compete there, a compromise would be required. At the end of January, Millard, together with Cubitt who had just arrived in Shanghai, chose to heed the advice of the editor from the *SCMP* and relent to the needs of the Chinese students. The idea of a rugby league tour was no more. Soccer was to be the sport and with this Millard cabled Australia on 31 January informing them of the change of direction and requesting that they play soccer instead of rugby league.<sup>40</sup>

Cubitt's position in China altered. He was no longer required as a coach given he had no experience with the game of soccer. Millard convinced Cubitt to remain in China to assist with the selection of the team. Yet what Millard may not have realised was that

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<sup>38</sup> Now known as Shanghai Jiao Tong University

<sup>39</sup> "Nanyang beats Tsinghua in Great Game," *China Press*, 28 January, 1923.

<sup>40</sup> "Soccer Tour of Australia is Now Plan," *China Press*, 1 February, 1923.



Cubitt had been employed by the *Sun* newspaper in Sydney to write about his trip, sport and life in China. An analysis of these articles is provided in Chapter Five. Cubitt would eventually return to Australia in May, a request for his services being made by rugby league in Sydney.

The Chinese had now emerged as individuals and not items and their concerns were to be considered. Millard had, in his own words, chosen soccer ‘solely in the interests of the players themselves’. He was not humble, but realistic. Yet he did not want to stray from his own initial desires to display a different type of Chinese. His new connection with the colleges and the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) directed him to look at the Chinese as an athlete and as a person. In Shanghai, Millard had been described as ‘a strong advocate for an opportunity to be given the Chinese to establish themselves as an athletic race in what he terms the world of sport’. Further, he considered that sport played an important role in a person’s life. He pointed out to the public ‘that athletics are an essential in the makeup of a successful career, and the building of a national character’.<sup>41</sup> Millard had established himself within the middle-class community that existed in Shanghai. His beliefs were exhibited in the newspapers and as Cubitt was to add ‘a visit to Australia and competing against Australians before an Australian crowd, will ensure for the Chinese a place on the sporting map of the Pacific and possibly further afield’.<sup>42</sup>

Soccer was the only football code played by the Chinese. It was brought to Hong Kong in 1897 by the British, after which it spread to the centres of Shanghai, Nanjing and Beijing. The first Football Association run by Chinese was founded in Hong Kong in

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<sup>41</sup> “Soccer Tour of Australia by Chinese Athletes will be Supported all over Country,” *China Press*, 2 February, 1923.

<sup>42</sup> “Best Centre Three Quarter in Rugger,” *China Press*, 4 February, 1923.

1908.<sup>43</sup> Yet, sport within China was still controlled by the YMCA dominated China Amateur Athletic Union (CAAU) until 1924, this also being the year when the national body of soccer, the Chinese Football Association, was formed.<sup>44</sup> China's first soccer international match was as part of the Far East Games, also known as the Far Eastern Olympiad<sup>45</sup> in 1913 at Manilla.

While the college system opened the eyes of Millard to what was needed for his venture to succeed, the YMCA would become a dominant force in the selection of the team over the next few months. They were an association that was about building national pride and modern national cohesion within China. In their eyes, for the tour to be a success, it was not to be about sport, but about displaying a fully dimensioned image of racial, hygienic, physically fit, well-educated, rounded men. It was about the mind and the body, not just the body. Thus investing in the YMCA created more issues for Millard. The YMCA had a mission to convey a new image of China, not just the Chinese, which was partly through this new emerging nationalism. Thus the choice of representation created the issues of class, character and education. For Millard, this was no longer just about sport, but also a particular kind of character type - well-behaved, well-educated, the modern Chinese nation that can stand side-by-side with Australian sportsmen. He started to understand that the tour was not so much about physicality, but the other things that are invested in those concepts; healthy bodies, healthy minds, gentlemanly behaviour and all that fits within the 1920s amalgam of the new youth.

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<sup>43</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua "Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s," in *Sport in Asian Society: Past and Present*, ed. J. A. Mangan and Fan Hong (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 196.

<sup>44</sup> Lozada, Eriberto P. Jr, "Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in Shanghai Sports," *City and Society* 18, no. 2 (2006): 219.

<sup>45</sup> The Far Eastern Games were run by the Far Eastern Athletic Association and held bi-annually between the three competing countries, Philippines, Japan and China. The first took place in Manilla in 1913. see Andrew D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*.

In China, the leader of the Chinese YMCA was Dr J. H. Gray. He noted the benefits of the tour in relation to the aims of the YMCA. Thus, when placed in charge of the selection process, Gray's desire was 'to make the team as select and as representative as possible'.<sup>46</sup> Based on this, Millard and Gray decided that the touring party would include 17 players, allowing for six reserves. Four would come from North China, seven from Central China and six from South China.<sup>47</sup> The reasons for this were elaborated by Cubitt in a letter sent to the *Sun* in Sydney, dated 11 April 1923.

It is the desire of all those interested to make the combination as representative, and at the same time as select, as possible. As this team will be the pioneers of an entirely new movement on the part of the Chinese into a new world of sport, nothing is being spared by those who have the interests of the Chinese athletes at heart to procure the best players, both socially and from an athletic standpoint.<sup>48</sup>

A truly representative team provided Millard a selection of Chinese individuals that illustrated both the variance within the Chinese race and also exhibited the differing physiques of its people. The question of representation would become a significant issue for Millard, one that would never be solved to everyone's satisfaction.

Millard's cable to Australia to request sanction of the tour also caused some concerns. While rugby league appeared to dismiss the potential racial problems a tour of Chinese may bring, soccer did not. Whether soccer was more concerned with the attitudes of Australians and its government or whether they were pre-empting any possible problems if the Chinese were to arrive is unknown, but the soccer athletes were alert to the fact that, in Australia, the Chinese could create racial tension. With the cable having made its way to the New South Wales Soccer Football Association (NSWSFA) and thence to the Commonwealth Football Association (CFA), a recently formed body that

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<sup>46</sup> "Australia to see Chinese Soccer Team," *China Press*, 5 April, 1923.

<sup>47</sup> "Chinese Team for Australia Being Chosen," *China Press*, 2 May, 1923.

<sup>48</sup> Leslie Cubitt, "Sport in China," *Sun*, 10 May, 1923.

controlled all soccer within Australia,<sup>49</sup> the CFA then contacted the Commonwealth Government, through the Prime Minister, to make sure that there were no objections.<sup>50</sup> They were more conscious of the sensitivities of race, and the White Australia policy, than the rugby authorities had been and thus held anxieties relating to the racial issues that a tour of this nature may exclusively raise.

Several questions are exercising the minds of the Commonwealth Association: (1) Would there be any racial objection to the visit? (2) Would it be good for Australia to encourage educated Chinese to tour our country? (3) Would the visit call world-wide attention to the White Australia policy? At this stage no good purpose would be served by commenting on the proposition, and before committing itself the C.F.A. will no doubt give the matter consideration from every point of view, though it would not cause any surprise if the Government put a ban on the proposal.<sup>51</sup>

Having gone to the ostensibly destabilising objective of writing to the Prime Minister, it might be expected that a rejection could easily have been forthcoming. No documented evidence exists of what the Prime Minister thought, but there was no rejection. By early April Millard had received a cable 'confirming the endorsement of his suggestion to tour a Chinese team of soccer players'.<sup>52</sup> With acceptance from Australia, Millard, Cubitt and Gray could commence the selection process, and a few days following the cable from Australia Gray sent correspondence to the Athletic Associations in China with a request to put forward players who may make up the touring team.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, interest in the tour was emanating from the trade and commercial organisations in China. They recognised that a tour of Chinese to Australia may open up the markets that had, for so long, been hindered by Australia's restrictive policies. This created a dilemma for Millard, who now recognised that his initial idea of a group of

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<sup>49</sup> The Commonwealth Football Association had existed since August 1921, although a previous version also existed between 1911 and 1914.

<sup>50</sup> "Chance for Soccer," *Sun*, 23 February, 1923.

<sup>51</sup> "Soccer," *Sports Referee*, 3 March, 1923.

<sup>52</sup> "Australia to see Chinese Soccer Team," *China Press*, 5 April, 1923.

<sup>53</sup> "Chinese Football Tour," *South China Morning Post*, 9 July, 1923.

sporting tourists would become a crusade for not only the YMCA who wanted to convey this new image of China, but now also China itself in opening up its markets to Australia. Thus when the President of China, Li Yuan-Hung, wrote a letter to Millard endorsing the idea of the tour, Millard viewed a possible change in his selection philosophy. The President had said that with 'the introduction of sports, I ardently hope that a closer friendship and increasing trade between the peoples of Australia and China may be progressively fulfilled'.<sup>54</sup>

Millard now had conflicting ideas of representativeness. On one side his own initial thoughts were to select the type of Chinese he had witnessed in France. Upon contact with the YMCA and the Westernised education system in China, his thoughts changed to one of a team that symbolised all of China. Now, Millard considered that if the team was to represent China, and give a good impression, the players would not only have to be athletic and educated, but the best available. Millard reasoned that he would now have to choose the 'strongest possible team'.<sup>55</sup> For Millard, this conflict would bring out the best in his negotiating powers over the next few months prior to departure. Yet, he also wanted to know how, and where, to find the best.

It would be Gray who would provide the chance for Millard to take the next step in the selection process. In May, Millard was invited to travel to Osaka to watch the Chinese participate in the 6<sup>th</sup> Far Eastern Championship Games. The Chinese were represented by a team comprising players from the South China Athletic Association (SCAA) following their defeat of the Nanyang team in an inter-port series. At the games, the Chinese team were victorious in both their matches, defeating Japan 5-1 and the Philippines 3-0. Thus Gray, who was promoting a China-wide representation, was now directing Millard towards an individual group of players, and those from the very spot

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<sup>54</sup> "President Strong for Soccer Tour," *China Press*, 21 April, 1923.

<sup>55</sup> "Dog Watch," *China Press*, 3 May, 1923.

he commenced his project, Hong Kong. And to Millard, this created a quandary: if he chose players from the south, he was not going to deliver to Australia a different type of Chinese than what was already there.

Millard now realised that he had to reject his earliest aims of taking to Australia Chinese similar to those he had seen in France, but fulfil the wishes of the Chinese interests. He could see that he was being caught in a clash of ideas where his own thoughts of who was to represent China were being drowned out by the needs of others. He realised that he was in a situation where he had to 'go with the flow' and see where it led him, otherwise he may not be able to get a team to Australia. When Millard arrived in China he thought he could just get a group of rugby players and take them to Australia. Now he was a puppet and had to bend to the whims of the Chinese and choose his players based on their needs.

Following the trip to Osaka, Millard announced that the eleven who represented the country would be automatically chosen, and to find a compromise for Gray, the other six, which later became five, would come from Central and North China,<sup>56</sup> as he was 'loath to break up the combination gained by (the SCAA) lads'.<sup>57</sup> Yet, those who already put their names up for selection from Central and North China were now worried that they would be 'extras', reserves with the team from the South playing throughout the tour. In satisfying the want for the best team, Millard had alienated the players from the other parts of China. In a letter to the *China Press*, he said it is my 'duty to endeavour to assemble the best team', and the whole team 'will form a very creditable side and will establish prestige for China in the Australian sporting world which will be worthily upheld in the future'.<sup>58</sup> Millard finally had a team selected, one

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<sup>56</sup> "Chinese Football Tourists," *South China Morning Press*, 11 June, 1923.

<sup>57</sup> "Millard Picks Soccer XI for Australia Trip," *China Press*, 3 June, 1923.

<sup>58</sup> Henry Millard, "Refuting a Statement," *China Press*, 24 June, 1923.

with eleven from South China and five from the rest of the country. He had, he believed, found a compromise that would suit the aims of the differing interested parties in China.

### **Return to Hong Kong**

When Millard made his selections he did not realise that the SCAA, from where the eleven of the South played, would eventually have their own agenda to fulfil. He thought that all athletes came under the banner of the CAAU, with Dr Gray presumably in charge. Thus when Gray organised the final details for departure in mid-June,<sup>59</sup> Millard was surprised to find that the Hong Kong Football Association<sup>60</sup> (HKFA) and the SCAA<sup>61</sup> chose not to release their players. The organisation of soccer in Hong Kong was different to that in Shanghai. The SCAA was the only Chinese team in the Western-based competition run by the HKFA. As the HKFA did not answer to any Chinese sporting body, it chose to await discussions with Millard prior to allowing its players to travel with the tour.

The meeting with Millard, at the beginning of July, was short, and productive. The SCAA were able to gain leverage in relation to the representation of the team. They held the view that South China had the best team and the South China supporters 'were anxious for the reputation of China in sport, that the team should be successful'. There was also concern among those in South China that any players from the North may not be considered as coming from the same political leaning as the Republican movement of the South.<sup>62</sup> The SCAA put forward that if any players from the North, those who had remained in Shanghai awaiting departure, were unable to travel, the replacements

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<sup>59</sup> "Chinese Football Tourists," *South China Morning Post*, 11 June, 1923.

<sup>60</sup> "Hongkong Football Association," *South China Morning Post*, 16 June, 1923.

<sup>61</sup> "Chinese Footballers' Visit to Australia," *South China Morning Post*, 30 June, 1923.

<sup>62</sup> "Chinese Football Tour," *South China Morning Post*, 9 July, 1923.

would be obtained from the South.<sup>63</sup> When the players from Beijing and Tientsin chose not to participate ‘as they would not be back in time for their College term’,<sup>64</sup> they were replaced by South Chinese. The SCAA were diffusing the connection to the rest of China. Only three players from outside Hong Kong would eventually join the team, all from Shanghai. Two were from Fuh Tan College and one from Nanyang College. The only other connection was that the China Athletic Association of North China provided the shirts for the tour, which Millard brought south with him to Hong Kong.

The final full team to travel to Australia was:

Mok Hing (Mo Qing)	Xiangshan, team leader
Leung Yuk Tong (Liang Yutang)	Panyu, captain
Wong Pak Cheung (Huang Bosong)	Huiyang
Lau Hing Cheung (Liu Qingxiang)	Dongguan (Guangdong)
Pam Kam Wing (Feng Jinrong)	Huiyang
Leung Tai Fong (Liang Difang)	Panyu
Kwok Po Kan (Gui Baogen)	Panyu
Li Wai Tong (Li Huitang)	Wuhua
Chan So (Su Chen)	Xunde (Guangdong)
Chan Kwong Ui (Chen Guangyao)	Panyu
Ng Kam Chaen (Wu Jinquan)	Bin'an
Lam Yuk Ying (Lin Yuying)	Xin'an
Wong Shin Wa (Huang Ruihua)	Xinhua (Guangdong)
Ip Kan Ko (Ye Jiunie)	Taishan
Chang His Eu (Zhang Xien)	Beijing (living in Shanghai)
Wang Chen Sheng (Wang Zhensheng)	Beijing (living in Shanghai)
Shen Kuo Cheun (Shen Guoquan)	Shanghai <sup>65</sup>

The seventeen Chinese, plus Millard were booked to depart Hong Kong via the *Yoshino Maru* on Wednesday, 18 July 1923.

The decision to send Chinese to Australia to participate in sport created interest amongst a number of Hong Kong-based Australians and New Zealanders who had their arguments published in the *SCMP*. In January, the discussion related to the physicality of the Chinese and their ability to perform at sports. In July, the argument revealed an

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<sup>63</sup> “Chinese Football Tourists,” *South China Morning Post*, 4 July, 1923.

<sup>64</sup> “Chinese Football Tour,” *South China Morning Post*, 11 July, 1923.

<sup>65</sup> I have listed the Cantonese name first then in brackets the pinyin Mandarin name. The home town is listed in the second column. Also note that the family name is written first.



uneasy tension amongst the writers about the racist policies of Australia. Some correspondents were concerned for the Chinese and in the main, discussion points related to the restrictions on entry to Australia and what would happen to these soccer players when they arrived. They feared that Millard had not obtained the requisite paperwork to avoid the impositions of the language test, finger-prints and other provisions imposed on the Chinese entering Australia, irrespective of rank or profession.<sup>66</sup> The writers displayed concerns about how Australians treated Chinese visitors, and how the Australians viewed those Chinese already living in their country. They believed that although the soccer players were from the 'higher classes' they would be treated just the same as the laundrymen and market gardeners in Australia.

These were individuals, not editors, academics or government representatives. The tour had provided them with a chance to transfer the debates about White Australia to the shores of China. Yet, it was a topic that was rarely brought up in the Chinese papers as the Vice Chancellor of Hong Kong University, Sir William Brunyate, stated. It was not 'a question that interests the Chinese people at the very moment'. They were 'much more concerned with their own relations to foreigners in China itself'.<sup>67</sup> Millard refused to be drawn into any race debate, but did attempt to dispel some of the concerns by stating the requisite paperwork had been obtained from Australia through Edward S. Little, the Australian Trade Commissioner in Shanghai. Of Little we will learn more in Chapter Six.

## **Conclusion**

The seventeen Chinese plus Millard departed Hong Kong on the *Yoshino Maru* on Wednesday 18 July 1923 amid firecrackers, the SCAA flag flying, many bouquets of

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<sup>66</sup> Queenslander, "Correspondence: The Chinese Football Tour," *South China Morning Post*, 6 July, 1923.

<sup>67</sup> "White Australia," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July, 1922.

flowers and an overall hearty send off.<sup>68</sup> When Millard watched as Hong Kong disappeared over the horizon he must have let out a big sigh of relief. The past ten months had been a time of high adventure and now he was on his way to fulfil his dream of displaying a different type of Chinese to the Australian public. Sport would prove to be Millard's tool in this venture and through its requirements for athleticism and competitiveness, he would demonstrate that Chinese were not just market gardeners, laundrymen, or similar, but very much like white Australians.

Millard set out to find the 'right kind of Chinese' by searching for athletic individuals similar to those he had seen in France as part of the Chinese Labour Corps. Yet there had been compromises in the process of selecting the team. During his time in China he would be drawn in different directions as he searched for his representative team. The make-up of the team would be influenced by many organisations, each keen to put forward, and use the tour to promote, their aims. The YMCA wanted to project a new image of China and therefore requested that the team be fully representative of the country. The President, and commercial entities, were of the belief the tour could promote better relationships between the two countries thus allowing for an opening up of trade. Finally, the SCAA maintained the team should represent South China and all it stood for, including the Kuo Min Tang.

Yet the players would also need to be of the 'right class', the gentlemanly class of individuals. Millard did not want coolies, but educated, middle-class athletes who would represent their country. The importance of accumulating a group of middle-class individuals was significant as Millard understood that sportsmen in Australia would not compete against Chinese of the lower classes, similar to those living in Australia. These Chinese would, in Millard's eyes, demonstrate that they were a race that could be seen

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<sup>68</sup> "Chinese Footballers," *South China Morning Post*, 19 July, 1923.

on equal footing to the white races. Millard's aims varied during his time in China and the choice of middle-class individuals would assist in the push for improved trade relations between China and Australia.

Millard's venture also generated vocal critics who voiced their opinions in the Letters pages of the *South China Morning Post*. When Millard put forward the idea of a rugby league tour, the commentary of the scribes discussed the inability they could see of Chinese physique being unable to handle the physical nature of the sport. Upon his return in June to Hong Kong a new discourse was created. The conversation turned to race, class and the politics of the White Australia policy. This was what the Commonwealth Football Association were wary of when they requested the assent of the Australian Government for the tour to take place.

The Chinese left Hong Kong not knowing what reception they would be afforded upon arrival in Australia. They knew nothing of the groundwork that had taken place, in Australia, prior to their arrival. Yet, these players were intent on showing themselves as athletes and upholding the pride of their country. Little did the Chinese players know that they would be an instrument of numerous forces within Australia as that country's White and Chinese populations tried to evaluate a tour of this kind amidst the heydays of White Australia.

## CHAPTER 3

### Soccer as a Sport

#### Introduction

The Chinese soccer players arrived at the beginning of August 1923 to an Australia where soccer was still developing. From its earliest days towards the end of the nineteenth century until the time of the tour, soccer in Australia lacked any organisational structure. Even with the creation of a national body in 1911 and its replacement in 1921, soccer would still be evolving as it searched for an identity within the football sporting landscape. Having not been formulated as a sport in Australia until after the other football codes, soccer would be relegated to a minority sport by Australian rules and rugby union, with rugby league also becoming a force following its split with rugby union in 1907-08<sup>1</sup>. It would be through the Chinese tour that soccer finally emerged as a key player within this landscape.

Soccer was entering the battle for “sports space”. Sports space can be loosely defined as ‘based on an implicit - and therefore unexamined - assumption that in each society there is a limited amount of “space” for sports, and that once this “space” is “filled” by one sport, there is no room for other sports.’<sup>2</sup> Thus, in Victoria and the other southern States, Australian rules had “crowded out” the other sports, including soccer. This was the same in New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland where rugby union, and later, rugby league, became the predominant sports. Culturally, sports space refers to ground availability, playing stocks, spectators, media, and later to marketing and sponsorship.

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<sup>1</sup> Tony Collins, "The Tyranny of Deference: Anglo-Australian Relations and Rugby Union before World War II," *Sport in History* 29, no. 3 (2009): 442.

<sup>2</sup> Ivan Waddington and Martin Roderick, "American Exceptionalism: Soccer and American Football," *The Sports Historian* 16 (1996): 31.

The matches against the Chinese, highly successful in these terms, threatened the established sports space of the other football codes.

The affect of the Chinese tour would leave a legacy that moulded the game of soccer for the future. Following from the successful, yet low-key, New Zealand tours of 1922 and 1923, the Chinese tour opened up soccer to a wider audience, and specifically to those who considered themselves entrenched as followers of the other codes. The tour would generate numerous successes, none of which were expected when the venture was proposed in early 1923. It would open the way for players from States other than NSW and Queensland to compete for positions to represent Australia against other countries. The tour would provide a group of investors with a way to show their entrepreneurial talents and in doing so create a new avenue of funding for the game itself. Finally, the tour would show the national body, the Commonwealth Football Association, how soccer should be run in the future.

### **Soccer in Australia pre-1923**

British immigrants introduced soccer to Australia. Its evolution followed a similar path to that which had been found in Britain with unstructured variants of the game visible until mid-way through the nineteenth century. Yet, unlike Britain, and New Zealand, there is little evidence of a public-school influence that directed those participating in football events to move in the direction of any specific code. Soccer, in Australia, did not emerge from its football foundations until the late 1870s.

The earliest known proof of football is Governor Macquarie's 1810 proclamation that Hyde Park, in Sydney, be designated for a number of sports, including football.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Douglas Booth and Colin Tatz, *One-Eyed : A View of Australian Sport* (St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 24.

Examples of football at Sydney's Hyde Park Barracks can also be found in 1829.<sup>4</sup> Games were played under a variety of rules up until the late 1850s and early 1860s when Australian rules in Victoria and rugby in Sydney emerged as distinct forms of football.<sup>5</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, Australian rules and rugby union were the two football codes, yet the boundaries between the games were not just the method of play, but also geographical. In the State of NSW rugby was chosen as the primary sport of followers of football, while in Victoria, and most other parts of Australia, it was the new Australian rules variant. Eventually Queensland would join NSW as the second rugby State allowing for significant competition to take place between the two States and eventually against other nations. Australian rules, however, was to be without international interest and generally played only in the other States, although some Australian gold seekers did take the game to New Zealand in the early 1870s.<sup>6</sup> It was late in the century before soccer in Australia became a competitive sport.

Argument surrounds the date of the first official game of soccer in Australia. Until recently, historians assumed that the match took place on the afternoon of Saturday, 14 August 1880 at Parramatta Common in Sydney's West between King's School and an "eleven". That eleven, later to be called Wanderers, won the match by five goals to nil.<sup>7</sup> Yet recent research has provided evidence of possible matches held before 1880 in

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<sup>4</sup> Mosely and Murray, "Soccer.", 214 (see intro., n. 11)..

<sup>5</sup> See Mosely and Murray, "Soccer"; Murray G. Phillips, "Rugby." in *Sport in Australia*, ed Wray Vamplew, Brian Stoddart and Ian F. Jobling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Nick Guoth, "Loss of Identity: New Zealand Soccer, Its Foundations and Its Legacies," *Soccer and Society* 7, no. 2-3 (2006): 187-207.

<sup>7</sup> see Wray Vamplew et al., eds. *The Oxford Companion to Australian Sport* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1992); Anthony Hughes, "'Treated with the Utmost Courtesy and Kindness': The Trans-Tasman Soccer Tours of 1904 and 1905," in *The World Game Downunder*, ed. Bill Murray and Roy Hay (Melbourne: Australian Society for Sports History Inc, 2006); Richard Kreider, *The Soccerites* (Cloverdale, Western Australia: SportsWest Media, 2005).

Hobart, Brisbane and Sydney.<sup>8</sup> The first governing body for the sport in the colonies, the (NSW) English Football Association, was created in 1882. Other autonomous governing bodies emerged over the following decades, each with authority to organise the sport and its fixtures within their areas of influence. These bodies, at times, worked against each other and thus only rare inter-colonial or inter-state soccer fixtures took place.

In NSW and Queensland, rugby was not yet sufficiently entrenched to oppose the rise of soccer as a sport. However, in the other States, Australian rules was dominant. Thus by Federation, NSW became the prominent State in the sport of soccer in relation to quality and quantity of players available, and contested most of its representative fixtures with Queensland. Although the first recorded interstate match took place in Melbourne in 1883 between NSW and Victoria, it was a rare foray by NSW into the States where Australian rules was the predominant code. Soccer in these “lesser” States eventually came down to games within their jurisdictions and those contested with visiting warships.

In 1904 and 1905 NSW was involved in two series of matches, on either side of the Tasman Sea, with New Zealand. From the end of June to the end of July, the NSW team was in New Zealand to contest nine matches including two against a representative New Zealand side. Games were played on both islands, NSW completing the tour with a record of five won, two drawn and two lost. The following year, New Zealand returned the favour, travelling across the Tasman Sea to visit NSW. Of the eleven matches, six were played in Sydney, two in Newcastle and one in Wollongong. The two mining districts of Illawarra and the Hunter Valley, which included Wollongong and Newcastle

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<sup>8</sup> Damian Smith, "Timeline of Australian Football 1850 - 1899," <http://www.ozfootball.net/museum/index.php/timeline/176-timeline-of-australian-football-1850-1899>.

respectively, were strong centres for soccer providing numerous players of high quality. The New Zealanders were more successful winning six matches, drawing two and losing the other three. Some of the matches included high scores, an example being a six-all draw in Wollongong against South Coast. Neither Association was able to take advantage of the reciprocal tours to further the game of soccer, and the events 'were lost as part of popular memory'.<sup>9</sup>

### **National Association**

New Zealand was to play an important role in the development of a national governing body. In May 1911 New Zealand commenced correspondence, initially with Canada, and then with England, for a team from those countries to tour the Australasia region. Other sports, including rugby league and union, were involved in matches against England. For soccer, as with these other codes, 'beating the mother at her own sports became regarded as a sign of colonial maturity'.<sup>10</sup> The costs incurred for a tour would have had to be borne by New Zealand and Australian soccer authorities. At that time the amount was considered too high which thus provided the main stumbling block for such ventures. Yet, the idea of a tour by other countries, and the fact that the States in Australia were individually taking it upon themselves to seek out the English, led to discussions about formulating a body to govern soccer throughout Australasia. Following a letter from a soccer enthusiast in West Australia, a journalist in the *Referee* wrote 'Apart from the question of an English team, the immediate benefits from direct and more frequent communication between the State governing bodies cannot be over-estimated.'<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Anthony Hughes, 'Treated with the Utmost Courtesy and Kindness', 24-27.

<sup>10</sup> Wray Vamplew, Brian Stoddart, and Ian F. Jobling, eds. *Sport in Australia*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> "Suggested Australian Association for Soccer," *Referee*, 13 September, 1911.



The dreams of the journalist and the correspondent to the *Referee* were realised three months later when a conference of delegates from all States and New Zealand met in Sydney. The 'Australasian Conference' took place from Friday, 15 December 1911 through to Sunday, 17 December 1911. Towards the end of the event, it 'was resolved that the time was opportune for the formation of an Australian Council or board of control'.<sup>12</sup> New Zealand already had their own Council and thus chose not to be involved. Within weeks a constitution was created and the Commonwealth Football Association (CFA) was formed. The CFA became the first association to represent a football code for the whole nation. Yet, the dream of the Conference, and of the CFA, to have an English team travel to Australia in the forthcoming years was never realised and with the advent of the First World War, the fledgling national body dissolved.<sup>13</sup>

Nearly a decade went past before the CFA would be re-formed. Yet, it would also be New Zealand that provided the impetus for such a development. In 1920, representatives from New Zealand again met with their counterparts in England to discuss the possibility of a tour to New Zealand.<sup>14</sup> The associations in NSW and Queensland were eager to participate in a similar venture and commenced discussions with England and New Zealand. Attempts were also made to bring about a tour to New Zealand by a representative team from these two Australian States. Yet, as in 1911, there was a belief that a combined voice representing all of Australian soccer would provide a stronger basis when discussing international matters.

In August 1921 a Conference was held in Melbourne at the Caledonian Club to discuss the re-formation of the CFA and other matters relating to interstate and international

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<sup>12</sup> "Football," *The Mercury*, 30 December, 1911. For notes on the Conference, see also a number of articles in the *Sydney Morning Herald* from 15 December, 1911 to 18 December, 1911. The first Annual meeting was not held until March 1913.

<sup>13</sup> Mosely and Murray, "Soccer", 217.

<sup>14</sup> *Referee*, 5 May, 1920, 12.

matches.<sup>15</sup> The premise for the Conference was similar to the 1911 event, the need to have a national body to negotiate an English soccer tour to Australia. The conference was successful in reconstituting the CFA, yet a number of its resolutions relating to interstate matches were significantly biased towards NSW and Queensland with the CFA having full powers bestowed upon them to administer international and inter-state fixtures.<sup>16</sup> In January 1922, at the first meeting of the CFA, Victoria and South Australia voiced their opinions of the choice by the national body to only send NSW and Queensland players to New Zealand.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the two southern States refused to be part of international activities, opening the door for future Australian representative teams to consist of players from only NSW and Queensland. The first of these international events would be the tour to New Zealand in the middle of 1922.

In May 1922 a squad of 16 players, eight from NSW and eight from Queensland, travelled to New Zealand to contest 14 matches. The Australian team won nine, lost four and drew one. While those statistics look healthy, of the three international matches against New Zealand, they lost two and drew one. The first international by either country against another country's association was held Saturday 17 June 1922 at Carisbrook, Dunedin. In early 1923 New Zealand were invited to travel to Australia, and yet again Victoria and South Australia were not involved. New Zealand played 16 matches on the tour, including three internationals, of which they won two and lost one.

### **Australian reaction Chinese invitation**

When, in early 1923 Millard had sent his letter of invitation for a Chinese soccer tour to the New South Wales Soccer Football Association (NSWSFA), he had opened the eyes of the organisers to a new way of furthering the code in Australia. The NSWSFA passed

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<sup>15</sup> *Minutes of the Meeting of the Commonwealth Football Association*, 16 August, 1921.

<sup>16</sup> *Referee*, 24 August, 1921.

<sup>17</sup> *Minutes of the Meeting of the Commonwealth Football Association*, 17 January 1922.

the invitation to the CFA. The concerns of the CFA in relation to the White Australia policy were noted in the previous chapter. The motives for the national body were twofold. First and foremost, it gave the Association another chance to publicise the game through international contests. Secondly, it allowed the chance for the Association to continue to 'mark time' until the eventual English tour would take place. The CFA believed that keeping the interest of the general public in the sport prior to an English tour was essential for the future of the game.<sup>18</sup>

The CFA was concerned with furthering the game, yet to do this they required funding. The Chinese tour provided an unprecedented dilemma for the Association. The previous New Zealand tour was self-funded and made a small profit. The proposed Chinese tour was an unknown, with promise, yet a venture with possible pitfalls. The CFA were hesitant in becoming part of the venture and awaited the options that may be provided by Millard. The initial terms Millard suggested were for a sixty and forty percent division of gate receipts, which was accepted by all except Victoria. This agreement was subsequently cancelled. Millard realised, without the New Zealand funding, he was unable to provide the initial financial backing to get the Chinese to Australia. Thus, Millard put to the CFA an alternative proposition 'under which the local authorities were required to finance the tour up to £2000'.<sup>19</sup> This too was rejected by the CFA and from that point official negotiations between Millard and the CFA were 'declared off'. The matter was sent back to the NSW(S)FA which put a decision to their meeting of 1 July 1923, held at Newcastle. The Committee decided that the 'cost of the tour would approximate £1760, and it was considered injudicious that the NSW(S)FA should

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<sup>18</sup> An English Amateur team did tour Australia in 1925.

<sup>19</sup> "Chinese Soccer," *Daily Guardian*, 7 July, 1923.

undertake the responsibility'.<sup>20</sup> Yet, not all was lost. A suggestion was put forward to create an Australian syndicate to provide the finances.

The financial considerations for an event of this nature and magnitude involved numerous parties and sources. As noted above, the primary concern was to get the touring party to Australia, and that was to be organised by the Australians through a syndicate. Prior to entry, the Australians would also need to furnish bonds to Customs for each Chinese member of the party, to guarantee that the visitors would return to China following the tour. This was completed prior to the departure of Millard and Shaw from Australia in October 1922.<sup>21</sup> In Australia, the syndicate would rely on gate takings to suitably provide for the touring Chinese. When interest was presented by other States and some smaller towns in New South Wales, guarantees were required of these other venues prior to acceptance of the Chinese to visit. The guarantees approximated £200 per match. Further, while the Chinese were abroad, their families would require an income to live on. Thus, a number of local businessmen in China submitted bequests to a fund, the 'Chinese Football Tour Fund', which by 28 July 1923 had amounted to \$3,364.<sup>22</sup> In Australia, the local Chinese also raised money to assist the players while they were on tour.<sup>23</sup>

### **Australian Tours Limited**

At the meeting of the NSW SFA in early July 1923 some of the delegates from the Association chose to form the syndicate, with the intention to take over from where the

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<sup>20</sup> "Chinese Soccer," *Sun*, 2 July, 1923.

<sup>21</sup> "Chinese Footballers," *Sun*, 19 October, 1922. An assumption has been made here that the initial provision of the bond by the NSWRL still held when the Chinese arrived.

<sup>22</sup> "Chinese Football Tour Fund," *South China Morning Post*, 28 July, 1923. It is unknown what the exchange rate from \$ in Hong Kong to £ in Australia was at the time, or how this money was divided up. Prior articles suggested that there was a need for up to \$7000.

<sup>23</sup> *Chinese Republic News*, 24 November, 1923. After expenses were removed, a total of £358/18/4 was raised.

old New Zealand venture had left off.<sup>24</sup> The syndicate included delegates from both the NSW and Queensland associations and eventually a number of other associations contributed.<sup>25</sup> The syndicate was soon replaced with a company, as the group wanted the risks limited to the amount of capital of the company.<sup>26</sup> Thus the company, Australian Tours Limited, was created. Its sole purpose was to assist with the finances in relation to the Chinese soccer tour.<sup>27</sup> The company was wound up following the departure of the team.<sup>28</sup>

The Chinese tour was a success in getting numbers through the gates. A total of 134,000 spectators witnessed the 24 games played in five States.<sup>29</sup> The Company, after all profits had been settled, finished with a credit balance of £1,336/11/6. This equates to an 88% return on the £1,500 initially invested. Of this, the Company chose to issue 41 2/3% (or £625) as dividends with the rest allocated to soccer sporting bodies.<sup>30</sup> The people who financed the project agreed that they would disclaim all intention to make any money and that they would only receive what they had paid into the pool.<sup>31</sup> Further, the constitution of the CFA stated that 2.5% of any profits made by soccer bodies of any representative fixture be delivered to the national body to be used for the furtherance of the game. As reported in *The Referee* of 23 December 1923, the Company declined to

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<sup>24</sup> "Chinese Tour," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July, 1923; "The Chinese Visit," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 July, 1923; *New South Wales Soccer Football Association Annual Report for 1923*.

<sup>25</sup> Members of the Queensland Football Association were in Sydney in connection with the Third Test Team to play New Zealand.

<sup>26</sup> *New South Wales Soccer Football Association Annual Report for 1923*.

<sup>27</sup> Australian Tours Limited was registered in New South Wales on 12 July 1923 and incorporated a day later with only 650 of the prescribed 1,500 £1 shares sold. State Records NSW: CGS 12951, *Companies Packet, Australian Tours Limited*; Memorandum of Association and Certificate of Incorporation.

<sup>28</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 151, 7 December, 1923, p. 5766; Although this resolution was fulfilled and the money distributed, the company name was not struck off the register and the Company dissolved until 23 June, 1939. State Records NSW: CGS 12951, *Companies Packet, Australian Tours Limited*; Supplementary note.

<sup>29</sup> "Soccer Team," *Referee*, 23 November, 1923.

<sup>30</sup> *New South Wales Soccer Football Association Annual Report for 1924*, 3-5.

<sup>31</sup> "Australia Wins Soccer Test," *Referee*, 22 August, 1923.

recognise the parent body's claim.<sup>32</sup> Yet, in the eventual break-up of the remaining amount, following the payment of dividends, the CFA received £133/13/3, which is just under 10% of the remaining profits. The reasoning for this change of mind is not known. Of the residual, Millard received only £70 as an additional gratuity.<sup>33</sup>

### Chinese players in Australia



*Sydney Mail*, 8 August, 1923

On Monday 6 August 1923 the Japanese mail steamer *Yoshino Maru* berthed in Sydney. Amongst those who alighted from the steamer were the sixteen Chinese soccer players, their manager, and Millard. With the Chinese now on the civilised part of what was to them *Terra Australis Incognita*, the locals were required to construct suitable

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<sup>32</sup> "Chinese Soccer Captain's Farewell Message to Australia Through the Referee," *Referee*, 21 December, 1923.

<sup>33</sup> *New South Wales Soccer Football Association Annual Report for 1924*, 3-5.

competitive opposition. The selection process varied throughout the tour, not influenced solely by the political decisions of the NSW and Queensland Associations, but owing directly to distance and methods of travel available. The tour consisted of localised matches and the prestigious representative matches. While the local Associations chose the make up of the lesser matches, it was the CFA which selected the players for the internationals. The CFA chose to bring together a full Australian representative team, opening the selection process to include players from States other than New South Wales and Queensland. In adopting this strategy, the CFA created a larger player pool for future internationals. It also established a pathway for promising players of the lesser States, one that did not exist within the duopoly created previously by the NSW and Queensland Associations. Thus the other States would no longer feel 'left out', allowing them more fodder for their drive to etch out a place within the sport space dominated by Australian rules. For the first international against China, Tasmania and South Australia accepted invitations to provide players.<sup>34</sup> As the *Mercury* noted, 'For the first time in the history of the game in Australia teams representing the full strength of two nations will contest an International match'.<sup>35</sup>

The first Australian team to play China consisted of players from NSW, Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia. Over the next three internationals, NSW and Queensland dominated the membership of the Australian team. When the Chinese travelled south and west, distance precluded many from NSW and Queensland to participate and thus team membership tended to include locals and those from the other southern States. In Melbourne an unofficial Australia v China match was held with players transported from NSW, Tasmania and South Australia to join the Victorians. The fifth and final international took place in Adelaide where NSW, Victoria and South Australia were

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<sup>34</sup> "Football," *Adelaide Advertiser*, 9 August, 1923; "The Chinese Team," *Age*, 9 August, 1923.

<sup>35</sup> "Soccer," *Mercury*, 17 August, 1923.

represented. Soccer was played in Western Australia, yet the organisers believed it was too far to travel, and the West Australians were considered unknown in quality. There were other problems in Perth that would be echoed throughout Australia.

When the opening match drew approximately 47,000 to the Sydney Showgrounds, the other codes felt threatened and chose to defend the sports space they had strived, over time, to build. In Western Australia, where Australian rules was the prominent football code, there appeared a hatred towards the other codes. 'In the view of the reported hostility of the NSW Rugby controlling bodies to the Australian game, it was tacitly agreed that, should the Chinese team visit Perth, no enclosed ground would be available for them.'<sup>36</sup> While soccer has no connection with rugby league, it was lumped in to the 'other' football code grouping that the Australian rules authorities despised. Australian rules did not want other codes to invade their monopoly of enclosed grounds.

Prior to the arrival of the Chinese soccer players, the NSW Rugby League (NSWRL) chose not to provide the usage of the Sydney Cricket Ground for the opening match between NSW and the Chinese team. Rugby league decided not to accede to the request for the ground, but to agree to a conference. A request for the ground by Australian rules for the NSW v Carlton match was also denied.<sup>37</sup> It was considered too late to make alternative arrangements for their own fixtures. The Showground struggled to hold the sizeable gathering leading to spectators trying to scale the fences<sup>38</sup> and the police halting the sale of tickets and turning thousands away.<sup>39</sup> The cricket ground was a larger venue and following the opening match, some papers discussed the matter. The *Bulletin* charged the rugby league authorities with 'rotten sportsmanship',<sup>40</sup> while

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<sup>36</sup> "Chinese Soccer Team," *Daily Guardian*, 28 September, 1923.

<sup>37</sup> NSW Rugby League. *Minutes of the General Committee Meeting 6 August 1923*, Item 16: From the NSW Soccer Association re: Sydney Cricket Ground.

<sup>38</sup> "Chinese soccer team make good," *Sunday Times*, 12 August, 1923.

<sup>39</sup> "Footballers from China," *Adelaide Advertiser*, 13 August, 1923.

<sup>40</sup> *Bulletin*, 16 August, 1923.



another, the *Sun*, asked why if soccer had, a few years earlier, given the league tour of England use of their grounds, that rugby league in NSW did not reciprocate.<sup>41</sup>

When the first international was held at the Showgrounds instead of the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), this time rugby league was falsely accused by the press of hoarding grounds for their own use. In a goodwill gesture towards soccer, rugby league was willing to negotiate the use of the SCG but the soccer authorities chose ‘that they were not going on with the matter’.<sup>42</sup> The reasons for soccer’s choice not to continue discussions on the matter is unknown, yet in doing so, the inability to use the SCG drew the ire of some press. In Melbourne the *Sporting Globe* said that ‘rugby league is being roundly condemned for its action. Truly the league has alienated a good deal of support by its recent actions’.<sup>43</sup> While rugby league was not the ‘greedy and churlish professional body’<sup>44</sup> the *Bulletin* had tagged them as, the press had opened the door for not only condemnation of rugby league but a wider discussion of ground allocations.

The ever-recurring fight for the control of grounds would be common-place during the tour when it visited the State capitals. In Brisbane the greed of the rugby league authorities halted the ability of the Queensland Football Association (QFA) to have use of the larger Exhibition Ground. The dealings were exposed in the unionist paper, *Daily Standard*, which provided a detailed description of the negotiations between the QFA and the Queensland Rugby League.<sup>45</sup> The Brisbane Cricket Ground, also known as the Woolloongabba, eventually was to be just sufficient in size to hold the modest crowds of ten to fifteen thousand spectators. In Adelaide the matter took a different turn where the local Australian rules authorities chose not to concede Adelaide Oval owing to the

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<sup>41</sup> “Soccer Triumph,” *Sun*, 14 August, 1923.

<sup>42</sup> N. S. W. Rugby League *Minutes of the General Committee Meeting 13 August 1923*, Item 18a. Re. Soccer Association.

<sup>43</sup> “Soccer Test,” *Sporting Globe*, 22 August, 1923.

<sup>44</sup> *Bulletin*, 16 August, 1923.

<sup>45</sup> “Chinese Football,” *Daily Standard*, 4 September, 1923.

need for it as the venue for the premiership final of their local competition.<sup>46</sup> The fifth international was therefore forced to the smaller ground of Jubilee Oval, which was located across the river from Adelaide Oval. In Melbourne, the Saturday games were contested on grounds other than the large Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), including the Essendon Cricket Ground and Fitzroy Oval, owing to cricket matches on the MCG. In the middle of the week, all of the big grounds were available, but at that time, the crowds were not as big and thus the need for a larger venue was not as important.

### **The Games**

The Chinese contested 24 matches, winning eight, drawing seven and being defeated in nine. Most of the defeats occurred early in the tour when matches were played in NSW and Queensland. While the Chinese team was considered good prior to their arrival, they were no match for the experienced sides in NSW and Queensland. The style of game was also quite different. The Chinese preferred to pass the ball around while the Australians relied heavily on their strength.

Taken from a viewpoint of their opening matches, it would appear that the Chinese are not accustomed to quite such robust football as is played by the white man. Those who have seen the visitors in action, however, state that in cleverness of foot and head work the Chinese are as good as, if not better than, our men.<sup>47</sup>

Their first win did not occur until near the midway point when they stopped in Tamworth, on their return from Queensland towards Sydney. From 11 August until 17 October, there were two games each week, one on a Saturday and one midweek, normally Wednesday. One extra game was held in Wollongong on the way to Sydney, from Melbourne, prior to their departure. Of the 63 goals scored by the Chinese, Li Wai Tong was to net 29 times. Considering Li was a late replacement, his aptitude for scoring was quite remarkable and the tour was to launch a career that went for many

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<sup>46</sup> *Bulletin*, 13 September, 1923.

<sup>47</sup> *Mercury*, 31 August, 1923.

decades thereafter including captaining the 1948 Chinese Olympic team to London.<sup>48</sup> Li commenced his large haul in the opening match of the tour, netting all the goals for China in a three-all draw with NSW.

The opening match set the scene for the rest of the tour. The overwhelming crowd of approximately 47,000 opened the eyes of all sporting enthusiasts throughout Australia. Although the Chinese were originally only to travel to venues in NSW and Queensland, the other States were soon approaching Australian Tours Limited to secure the Chinese for matches in their States. The approval to extend the tour was given not long after the opening matches. Considering that the income from the first few matches had exceeded the expenses, it was stated that 'the promoters can well afford to widen the scope of their expense, to further the game in the weaker States'.<sup>49</sup> Other venues also became interested in the Chinese, including Orange which guaranteed the expenses for an exhibition match between the Chinese and a Sydney team.<sup>50</sup> They were not to be successful in the request, yet the towns of Tamworth and Harden were. While the Chinese travelled to venues close to the major State capitals, any matches in country towns took place if the team was travelling through. Orange would involve a trip west from Sydney and one back, and the logistics of this precluded the option.

The touring party arrived in Sydney on Monday 6 August. 'Pretty girls and other members of the Chinese community' were there to greet them.<sup>51</sup> A 'well-known Chinese lady pinned a lucky 'kewpie' to the buttonhole of each'.<sup>52</sup> One of the members of the Chinese welcoming community was Otto Kong Sing. Otto's father, of the same name, was a well-recognised educated, middle-class 'Anglo-Chinese' athlete from the late-1890s, who was involved in numerous sports including as captain of the Newington

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<sup>48</sup> *Smith's Weekly*, 27 March, 1948.

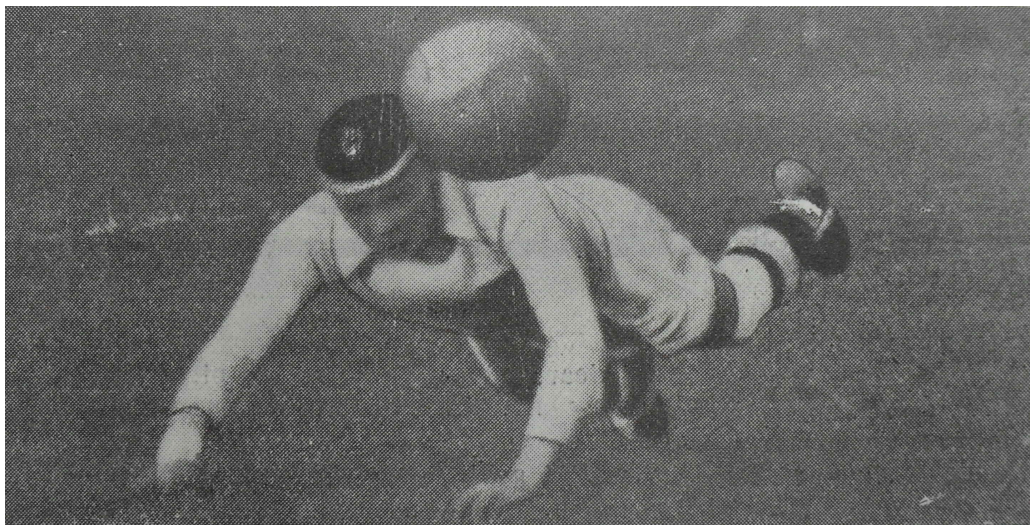
<sup>49</sup> "Soccer," *Daily Guardian*, 22 August, 1923.

<sup>50</sup> "British Association," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 August, 1923.

<sup>51</sup> "Soccer," *Adelaide Advertiser*, 7 August, 1923.

<sup>52</sup> "Soccer," *Daily Guardian*, 7 August, 1923.

College rugby team. Otto, the senior, studied to become a solicitor and travelled to Hong Kong in 1904 where he died in 1917.<sup>53</sup> The team was welcomed by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Sydney on their first night and were received at a full reception the following day, by members of the soccer community, politicians and local Chinese. The Chinese players attended the reception in Chinese costume.<sup>54</sup>



A wonderful save (Opening match)<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Gary Osmond and Marie-Louise McDermott, "Mixing Race: The Kong Sing Brothers and Australian Sport," *Australian Historical Studies* 39, no. 3 (2008): 338-55; "Death of Mr. Otto Kong Sing," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 May, 1917.

<sup>54</sup> "The Soccer Season," *Referee*, 8 August, 1923.

<sup>55</sup> "A Wonderful Save," *Sunday Mail*, 15 August, 1923.



A good header (opening match)<sup>56</sup>

The first leg of the Chinese tour was in Sydney with matches on Saturdays, 11 and 18 August, and Wednesdays, 15 and 23 August. The result on the field of the opening match, and the enthusiasm in the media following the game guaranteed a healthy patronage for the remaining matches in Sydney. A good number of the 40,000-plus who attended the match came from the ranks of rugby league support. Rugby league suffered badly on that Saturday with only 13,500 attending the four games. The representative Australian rules match was not affected as 10,000 made their way to that match. The Chinese game saw rugby league lose out severely in gate takings for that weekend. Rugby league relied on the takings to pay its players. The opening match was an example where the tour became a threat to the dominant codes throughout Australia, endangering their source of income.

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<sup>56</sup> "A good header," *Sydney Mail*, 15 August, 1923.





A piece of smart work (Australia v China 18 August, 1923)<sup>57</sup>



An incident (Australia v China 18 August, 1923)<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> "A piece of smart work," *Sydney Mail*, 22 August, 1923.

The midweek match for the Chinese, held at the SCG in front of 7,000 spectators, was contested against a team called Metropolis.<sup>59</sup> Representing the Sydney area, the hosts won by four goals to two, but not until after the enigmatic goalkeeper for China, Lau, was injured and taken to hospital.<sup>60</sup> Lau's injury would affect his play the following Saturday in the first international where the Chinese were defeated five goals to one. Lau was the only recognised goalkeeper in the Chinese squad of players. The crowd of 25,000 counters many arguments that most were at the opening match for its novelty as soccer in Sydney did not have such sizeable patronage.<sup>61</sup> Rugby league returned to its normal spectator numbers with 29,000 in total attending the four matches and the NSW versus Victoria Australian rules match drew 8,000. On the Wednesday, the Chinese played against a local Sydney team, Granville, at Clyde Oval in front of about 3,000 spectators. Prior to the match, a two-all draw, the Chinese had been received at the local Town Hall and visited the Clyde Engineering Works.

The trip to the engineering works was part of an extensive social program developed for the Chinese visitors. The events were so frequent that the games proved to be rare rest for the players. One Sydney journalist was impressed with the Chinese players' stamina stating that 'banquets, picnics and other outings follow in rapid succession; yet the tourists turn out on match days'.<sup>62</sup> Not all events in the early days received appreciation by the media. On the day following the opening match, the Chinese were taken by the Vice-Consul for China to the National Park, south of Sydney.<sup>63</sup> On their return that Sunday night, the bus with the Chinese was allowed to jump the queue waiting for the punt at Tom Ugly's, and significantly ahead of some nurses late back from a picnic south. The writer summed up the situation in light racist terms. 'Australians are rarely

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<sup>58</sup> "An incident," *Sydney Mail*, 22 August, 1923.

<sup>59</sup> "British Association," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 August, 1923.

<sup>60</sup> *Tung Wah Times*, 25 August, 1923.

<sup>61</sup> "International Soccer Test," *Sun*, 18 August, 1923.

<sup>62</sup> "Australia Wins Soccer Test," *Referee*, 2 August, 1923.

<sup>63</sup> "Chinese Footballers," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August, 1923.

wanting in courtesy to overseas visitors, whether white, black, or yellow. The only difference is that it speeds the parting guest much more enthusiastically when he is coloured.’<sup>64</sup> In this instant, the fact of being sportsmen gave the Chinese an advantage over others.

Following four matches in Sydney, the Chinese travelled to Newcastle for the second international where they were defeated by a last-minute penalty, four goals to three.<sup>65</sup> The match was exciting for the 16,000 who gathered at the Newcastle Showground as each time Australia took the lead, the Chinese would draw level. The Chinese were considered unlucky and many believed that following the trip to Queensland, ‘when Sydney sees the Chinese team again they will be a really high-class combination’.<sup>66</sup> On their return towards Sydney, the Chinese stopped in Hamilton to contest a match against the a team representing the Newcastle district. The Chinese lost seven goals to one on a field that fulfilled the mining tradition of early football history in the region, the game was played on a surface of black coaldust. When a reporter from the *Chinese Republic News* enquired about the result, the players stated ‘(W)e are not used to playing on sandy and gravelly fields and so that is why there was such a big difference in the score this time’.<sup>67</sup>

The match in Hamilton would be the first of three regional ventures prior to the trip north. The seventh match was a contest with a team representing the Illawarra district, located south of Sydney. Played at Bode’s Oval in Wollongong with a large attendance of 12,000, the game finished in a draw, each team scoring once. The surprise of the match, related by local journalists, was not the Chinese on the field, but the merchants from Sydney who chose to fly to Wollongong for the game thus adding a ‘touch of

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<sup>64</sup> “Chinese Before Nurses,” *Daily Guardian*, 14 August, 1923.

<sup>65</sup> “Saturday’s Football,” *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner’s Advocate*, 27 August, 1923.

<sup>66</sup> “Soccer,” *Sydney Sportsman*, 28 August, 1923.

<sup>67</sup> “The South China Soccer Team’s 67th Match,” *Chinese Republic News*, 8 September, 1923.



novelty to a scene that was already replete with novelty'.<sup>68</sup> The following Wednesday, the Chinese were in South Maitland at the Abermain Recreation Ground for a match against Maitland. Again the result ended in a draw, two all. The crowd was one of the lowest for the tour, only 1,600, and significantly this was unfortunate, as the proceeds of the gate were to go to the Miner's Relief Fund following the nearby Bellbird Disaster.<sup>69</sup>

The result of yet another draw or loss began to concern a few. A worry existed that the players were being 'run to death' playing twice a week for three months. To these people, 'the whole thing savours of money making'.<sup>70</sup> Other journalists were not as worried. One believed the tour a success following the opening games. 'Even supposing the arrangement of the tour was suggested in the first place as a novelty to advance the cause of Soccer, the fact remains that the Chinese students have delivered.'<sup>71</sup> Another was more succinct. 'As a factor in international football China has certainly arrived.'<sup>72</sup> While there was a belief by some in the Chinese press that the players were being overworked,<sup>73</sup> the players themselves were enjoying the tour and prior to each match they sang their war-cry. The following is a literal translation:

Ho! Ho! The loud laughter,  
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!  
We've come to Australia  
To play the "Soccer"  
Our China team,  
To represent Great China.

We want good friendship,  
Don't mind win or defeat,  
But hope both closer,  
Australian Chinese.  
Peace and prosperity.

Long way we have come from,

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<sup>68</sup> "Soccer," *Illawarra Mercury*, 7 September, 1923.

<sup>69</sup> "Soccer Code," *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 5 September, 1923.

<sup>70</sup> "Soccer," *Sydney Sportsman*, 4 September, 1923.

<sup>71</sup> "Soccer," *Daily Guardian*, 30 August, 1923.

<sup>72</sup> *Bulletin*, 16 August, 1923.

<sup>73</sup> *Tung Wah Times*, 25 August, 1923.

Facing difficulties,  
To exchange our ideas,  
And enlarge our trade.  
Ho! Brethren. Patriotic and reverent.

We're glad to meet.  
All must wake up.  
And show our ability,  
And (thereby) gain for China.<sup>74</sup>

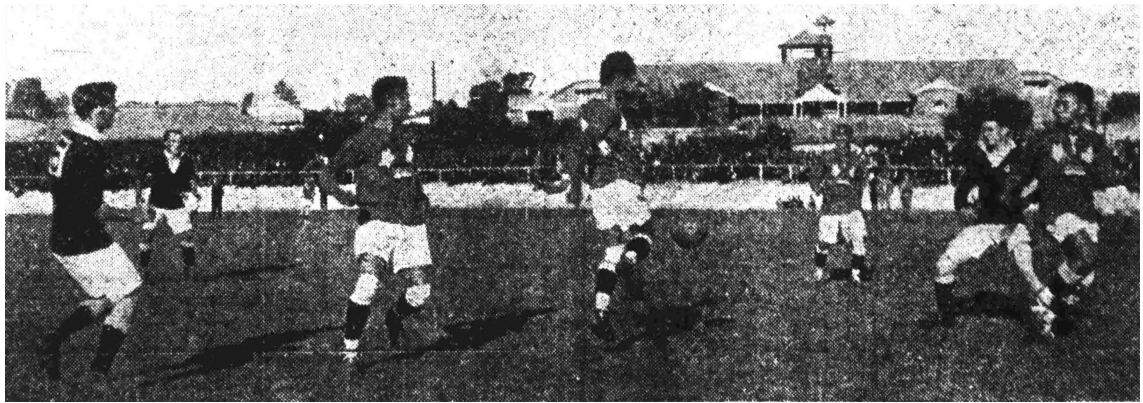
The war-cry provided for both their countrymen in Australia, and the Europeans who read the translation, a further view of the desires of the soccer visitors to combine their Chinese patriotism with an acceptance of the demands for global engagement. China and Australia were ripe for improved trade relations and the players considered themselves as ambassadors, not only of China and its people, but also that country's commercial and trade interests. Further discussion on trade will be provided in Chapters 5 and 6.

The Chinese travelled by train from Maitland to Queensland for a three-match tour of that State, two on a Saturday and one on Wednesday. On Saturday 8 September, the Chinese played against a team representing Queensland. The result, as with the more recent games, was a draw, each team scoring a goal. The Chinese played in a gentlemanly manner, not conceding a single foul against their opposition and that impressed the 15,000 spectators, more than the ground could hold, such that they 'were encroaching on the cycle track.'<sup>75</sup> The game had the celebrity comedienne, Miss Ruby Norton, provide the kick-off for the Queensland side.

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<sup>74</sup> "Chinese Footballers," *Daily Standard*, 6 September, 1923.

<sup>75</sup> "Soccer," *Daily Standard*, 10 September, 1923; "A Great Crowd," *Sports Referee*, 8 September, 1923.



Chinese Footballers (Brisbane v China)<sup>76</sup>

The mid-week match was held inland at the Ipswich Cricket Reserve, in oppressive heat where the temperature reached 93 Fahrenheit,<sup>77</sup> against a West Moreton team representing the Ipswich region. Ipswich was a mining town similar to Wollongong and Newcastle, and like the NSW towns, had a rich tradition in soccer. The first ever captain for Australia of an international match, Australia versus New Zealand in Dunedin on Saturday 17 June 1922, was Alec Gibb from Ipswich. Gibb did not participate in the match, being injured, but his team-mates were successful by a score of four goals to two. There was some controversy in the match. 'The game was somewhat marred by indifferent refereeing, one of the Ipswich goals being glaringly offside.' Another paper stated that '(T)he referee's decisions were very faulty, and soon earned the disapproval of the crowd'.<sup>78</sup> Further, in an unsavoury incident 'Leung and Edwards got into holts and commenced kicking one another and a halt was called for a second or two to compose their differences.' The two players shook hands and play continued.<sup>79</sup> The incident was one of a rare few where players of each team, while on the field, became involved in matters other than playing the game. Generally, the Chinese were gentlemanly on the field and the robustness and aggression was left to the Australians.

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<sup>76</sup> "Chinese Footballers," *Daily Standard*, 11 September, 1923.

<sup>77</sup> "China Turns the Tables," *Sunday Times*, 23 September, 1923.

<sup>78</sup> "Soccer," *Sports Referee*, 15 September, 1923; "Soccer," *Daily Standard*, 13 September, 1923.

<sup>79</sup> "Soccer," *Daily Standard*, 13 September, 1923.

The Chinese were beginning to tire from all of the travelling and the exhaustion came to a head in the third international, played at the Brisbane Cricket Ground in front of only 10,000 spectators on Saturday 15 September. The Chinese 'played bravely and they had defended many times within an hour. After that, they were worn out',<sup>80</sup> and the Australians overran them. The final score was five goals to nil with four netted in the second half. The Chinese had now played 11 matches without a win and only five draws.

The Queensland leg provided for the players on the field a disappointing time. Off the field it was mixed. The Queenslanders treated the Chinese players generally very well. Their generosity astonished the organisers of the tour noting that the 'business people contributed many trophies for competition among the members of the team'.<sup>81</sup> Unfortunately for the Chinese, an unsavoury element of Australia reared its head when 'pickpockets touched their clothes during absence from a Brisbane hotel'.<sup>82</sup>

The results in Queensland and the hotel robbery behind them, the Chinese were extremely keen to perform well when they stopped in Tamworth on the way from Brisbane to Sydney. The northern NSW town were also intent on putting on a show for the visitors. They moved the races for the second day of the Tamworth Jockey Club's Spring meeting to a time earlier in the day<sup>83</sup> so that the players and spectators could attend both events. Further, a large number of shops chose to 'close their premises at 1 o'clock'.<sup>84</sup> The Chinese visited the horse races on both the Tuesday and Wednesday and played in a tennis match against the locals on the Wednesday morning.<sup>85</sup> All of these distractions did nothing to alter the focus of the Chinese when it came to the game at the

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<sup>80</sup> "10th and 11th Competition," *Chinese Republic News*, 22 September, 1923.

<sup>81</sup> "Back From Tour," *Sun*, 20 September, 1923.

<sup>82</sup> "China turns the Tables," *Sunday Times*, 23 September, 1923.

<sup>83</sup> "Tamworth Soccer," *Northern Daily Leader*, 7 September, 1923.

<sup>84</sup> "Soccer and Races," *Northern Daily Leader*, 17 September, 1923.

<sup>85</sup> "Football," *Northern Daily Leader*, 19 September, 1923.

No. 1 Oval against a representative team from Tamworth and neighbouring towns. The Chinese easily accounted for their lesser opponents, winning their first game on tour by nine goals to nil. A healthy crowd of 3,500 attended with some Chinese driving up from Sydney for the game.<sup>86</sup>

The result in Tamworth was to be the turning point for the Chinese tour, in playing terms. When the Chinese arrived in Sydney aboard the Glen Innes train the players 'looked the picture of health, and they all stated they had a good trip'.<sup>87</sup> The players were re-invigorated and keen for a result in the next match, the fourth international between Australia and China. It was at this time, in late September, that the original schedule for the tour was to be completed. With the success of the early games, especially the crowd sizes, the tour was extended to include games in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.<sup>88</sup> On Saturday 22 September 1923, approximately 7,000 turned up to watch China defeat Australia by three goals to one. The Australian captain Judy Masters complimented his opponents after the match that 'China beat us on their merits. They have kept plugging away, and I'm glad to see them victorious. It was a fair-dinkum win.'<sup>89</sup>

The trip from Sydney to Melbourne was a long one, and thus a stop was organised in the combined towns of Harden and Murrumburrah. The towns had been involved in football using the railway as a method of transporting its players. Only a few weeks prior to the Chinese visit, Harden contested a set of matches with the Goulburn Junior Soccer Club, a regular event.<sup>90</sup> As was witnessed at Tamworth, the locals provided a strong programme of entertainment for the Chinese. On the morning of the game, the Chinese travelled to Garangula Station where they 'took part in shearing a few sheep

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<sup>86</sup> "Soccer," *Northern Daily Leader*, 20 September, 1923.

<sup>87</sup> "Back From Tour," *Sun*, 20 September, 1923.

<sup>88</sup> "Soccer," *Daily Guardian*, 22 August, 1923.

<sup>89</sup> "China Turns the Tables," *Sunday Times*, 23 September, 1923.

<sup>90</sup> "Soccer Football," *Murrumburrah Signal*, 28 August, 1923.

with the machines.’ Some of the Chinese also ventured to have a ride on horseback. This was a new experience to the Chinese players. The match, though, would not be against locals, but a team brought in on the same train from Sydney representing its Metropolitan area. Yet, spectators came in from nearly towns by bus, car and train for the match and a crowd of 1,600 built up prior to kick off. The Metropolitan team won three goals to two, yet only after scoring the winner late in the match.<sup>91</sup>



International Association Football<sup>92</sup>

The Sydney Express continued south with the Chinese and arrived in Melbourne at 2pm on the day after the Harden-Murrumburrah match. They were now entering Australian rules country. For the next two months, the Chinese would entertain crowds in the three States where Australian rules was the predominant sport and soccer a long-distant second in participation and spectators. Many hoped that the Chinese tour would alter this imbalance where national pride of the home-grown game held sway. ‘The match will provide supporters of the Australian game with the opportunity to see the English

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<sup>91</sup> “Soccer Football,” *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27 September, 1923.

<sup>92</sup> “International Association Football,” *Argus*, 1 October, 1923.

game played by high class exponents.’<sup>93</sup> Melbourne hosted three matches. They were played only as the Chinese passed through the city. The first, the fifteenth game of the tour, was an unofficial international against a selection from different parts of Australia. Played on Saturday 29 September at the Fitzroy Oval the Australian team defeated China two goals to nil.<sup>94</sup> The crowd of 12,000 was considered remarkable in its composure. ‘Chinese residents attended in large numbers, hoping for the victory of their countrymen. There were Little Bourke Street denizens present whose only sport in the past has been Fan-tan.’<sup>95</sup>

The Chinese travelled by train from Melbourne to Adelaide. Unfortunately, not too far outside of Melbourne, during a stop at Bacchus Marsh, one of the players was pick-pocketed of £16, 10/. Together with the £28 the players had stolen in Brisbane while they were having breakfast, the two events left a sour taste for the Chinese.<sup>96</sup> When they arrived in Adelaide, the Chinese found that the whole of their stay had been planned to the last detail including a visit to Penfold’s wineries of the Barossa Valley, cinema viewings and tea-parties.<sup>97</sup> The day after they arrived, the Chinese participated in a clash on Jubilee Oval, in front of 4,000 spectators, with a representative team from South Australia .<sup>98</sup> The Chinese won convincingly six goals to two. There was some argument in the Adelaide press about the selection for that game. In a letter to the Editor of the *News*, one correspondent stated that the selection process was a ‘joke’ and a ‘farce’ and that some teams, including the Premiers of the recent season, were not represented.<sup>99</sup> The soccer authorities in Adelaide countered a few days later stating the specific players were not selected for the South Australian or Australian game for

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<sup>93</sup> “Soccer,” *Herald*, 28 September, 1923.

<sup>94</sup> “International Match,” *Sporting Globe*, 29 September, 1923.

<sup>95</sup> “Australia v China,” *Herald*, 29 September, 1923.

<sup>96</sup> “Chinaman’s Luck,” *News*, 3 October, 1923.

<sup>97</sup> “Chinese Soccer Players,” *Advertiser*, 3 October, 1923.

<sup>98</sup> “Soccer Football,” *Observer*, 6 October, 1923.

<sup>99</sup> “Soccer,” *News*, 3 October, 1923.

reasons ‘well known to those behind the scenes’.<sup>100</sup> An assumption can be made that the respective players, out of favour with the officials owing to certain indiscretions, could have made a difference, and thus the best team was not placed against the Chinese. The South Australian authorities placed their dealings with the players above the commercial interests of the tour.

The fifth international, and seventeenth match of the tour, was held at Jubilee Oval with 12,000 in attendance. The Australian team consisted of five players from New South Wales, one from Victoria and five from South Australia. The match ended in a draw with each team scoring twice, although China led by two goals into the second half. At a dinner held following the match, members of the local Chinese community stated that they were overwhelmed with the behaviour of the local supporters at the match and believed that ‘(N)ow that the barrier of prejudice, which had existed for centuries, was broken,’ they hoped for more encounters between East and West. The locals had exhibited the ‘kindest feelings’ towards the Chinese on the field, and showed true sportsmanship towards the players of both sides.<sup>101</sup> The stay of the Chinese soccer players in Adelaide was brief, lasting only five nights, but they had left with their reputation held high.

The day following the fifth international, the Chinese travelled back to Melbourne as a stopover before proceeding to Tasmania. In Melbourne they played a match on the Tuesday afternoon at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of a small crowd of 2,000 spectators. The Chinese won the game three goals to one. The match raised an interesting description from an Australian rules writer, called “J.W.”, who was unfortunately assigned the task of covering the match, even though he had no knowledge of the game, nor any care towards it. His commentary deserves mention as it

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<sup>100</sup> “International Soccer,” *News*, 5 October, 1923.

<sup>101</sup> “International Soccer,” *Advertiser*, 8 October, 1923.



is a rare item discussing the muscularity of the Chinese. Initially he recognises that not one player in the local side is Victorian, six of English origin and five from Scotland. Yet, in an attempt to attack soccer and defend Australian rules he wrote '(S)eeing the little Chinese bodies running around and twisting, studying position and passing, one recognised it was a game for them, and much better suited to their physique and antecedents that the more robust and vigorous Australian method.'<sup>102</sup>

The second match in Melbourne completed, the Chinese travelled by boat to Burnie in Tasmania before taking the train to Hobart. Yet, not all of the players made the trip. Wong, from Tientsin, and Shen, from Shanghai, had returned to China from Melbourne, as they were unhappy with the way they were treated. A discussion of this matter will be presented in the next chapter. Again, as in Adelaide, the complete itinerary was laid out for the, now 14, Chinese players and manager upon their arrival. Entertainments included a trip to the Cadburys chocolate factory near Hobart. In Tasmania, four matches were played, with two in Hobart and two in Launceston.

Unlike in other major cities, the Tasmanian Football League provided the venue, North Hobart Oval, for the matches against the Chinese.<sup>103</sup> On the first Saturday of the visit, a selection of players from Tasmania defeated the Chinese by two goals to one. The weather was unsettled, yet still 4,000 turned up to the venue to watch the Chinese, with even a band playing the Chinese National Anthem.<sup>104</sup> The inclement weather was to continue through the tour of the island. On a waterlogged ground, the Chinese easily accounted for a Southern Tasmania selection by eight goals to one, with Li Wai Tong scoring six times.

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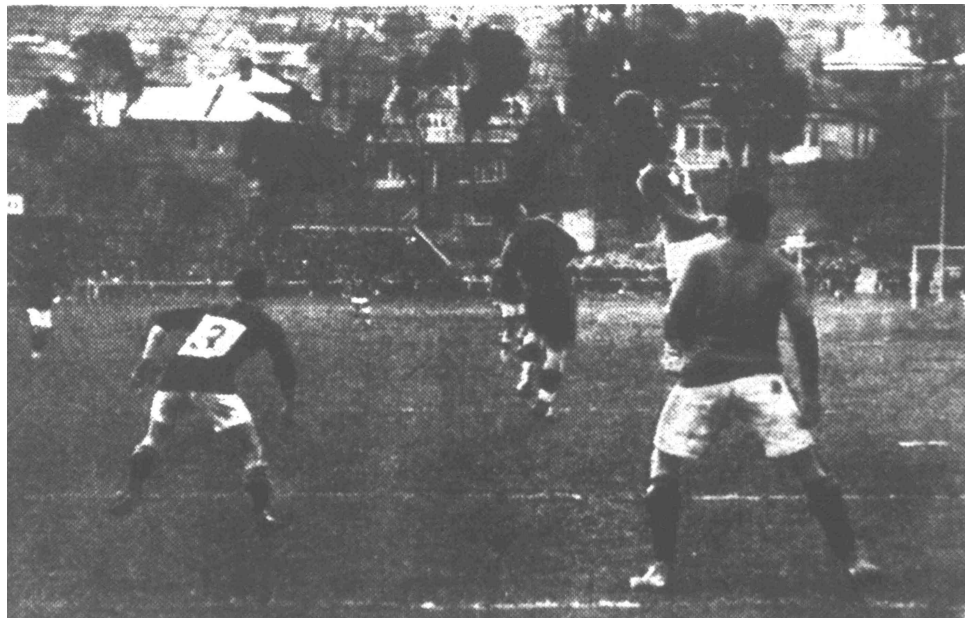
<sup>102</sup> "Victoria v China at Soccer," *Australasian*, 13 October, 1923.

<sup>103</sup> "Soccer," *Mercury*, 5 October, 1923.

<sup>104</sup> "Soccer," *Mercury*, 15 October, 1923.



Lucas, Tasmania's goalie clears his goal<sup>105</sup>



Wong Pak Chung heads the ball in front of goal<sup>106</sup>

Following the two matches in Hobart the Chinese made their way to Launceston. On the Saturday, playing their 21<sup>st</sup> game, the Chinese gained revenge for their loss in Hobart winning four goals to one against Tasmania at the Cricket Ground. Unlike the correspondent in Melbourne a week prior, the writer in the local newspaper praised the game. 'It was the first occasion on which many Launceston people had seen an

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<sup>105</sup> "Soccer," *Mercury*, 15 October, 1923.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

exhibition of this game, and they were surprised at the skill required and the speed at which it was played.’<sup>107</sup> The Tasmanian team consisted of only one true-born Tasmanian, the rest having migrated from Great Britain, which explains the need to get more locals interested in soccer.

The next Thursday the Chinese contested a match against Launceston at the Launceston Cricket Ground. To improve the size of the crowd the organisers chose to make the event ladies’ day and children’s day for the match with a grandstand set aside for the children. Unfortunately, not all members of the Chinese touring party were to be at the match as the team manager, Mok Hing, was hospitalised with malaria.<sup>108</sup> The game, won by the Chinese five goals to one, attracted a number of school pupils who ‘were very interested in the skill shown by the players, though the game was a little bewildering after their accustomed Australian rules’.<sup>109</sup> Although Australian rules was played or supported by most who attended the games in Launceston, the game of soccer had left an impression, and that was one of the main aims of the CFA.

The Chinese travelled to Melbourne, arriving the day after the Launceston match. On Saturday 27 October, they played against Victoria at the brand new Essendon football ground, called Windy Hill, in the penultimate match of the tour. As the Chinese were dressed in dark blue shirts, the Victorians chose to wear the local Essendon colours of black and red. While China won the match two goals to nil in front of 7,000 spectators, the highlight of the afternoon was the half-time entertainment where Shanghai player, Chan So performed in a kicking competition with Essendon rover Charlie Hardy. The two players first kicked a soccer ball as far as possible and then an Australian rules ball. Hardy proved the better in each case, although only by a small margin and was awarded

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<sup>107</sup> “International Soccer,” *Examiner*, 22 October, 1923.

<sup>108</sup> “Chinese Soccer Team,” *Examiner*, 23 October, 1923.

<sup>109</sup> “Chinese Soccer Team,” *Examiner*, 25 October, 1923.

a gold medal for his victory.<sup>110</sup> That was the end of the southern leg of the tour, but what happened next showed that not everything was organised well for the Chinese.

The manager, Mok Hing, chose to travel to Sydney with Millard, leaving the players to stay with the Chinese Consul General. Discussions were held in relation to a charity match in Sydney and another match in Goulburn on the return trip to Sydney, but neither eventuated.<sup>111</sup> In Melbourne, the players believed that they had fulfilled their responsibilities to the contract, but, after negotiations, an extra match in Melbourne was scheduled for 3 November.<sup>112</sup> Mr Oui, the Consul General believed that there were other reasons for the changes in the tour schedule.

The leader has some private matters in Sydney and asked me to take care of his team members. I think that's my responsibility, so I am taking care of them with the Consul, Mr Liang. I know it is a holiday and there is no available hotel, so I invited the members to live in my house. Even though there were many inconveniences, I could overcome these because of my responsibility. Now I have done my job, but I am disappointed with the leader who was saying the ground is not good enough to make a contest. Actually the reason is the leaving date is coming very soon and he wants to return to China. Without asking team members, he decided cancel the last contest. But I suggested if we told the team members the income of this trip will go to the local charities, I think they will stay. Otherwise, this income will be put into private use<sup>113</sup>.

The team was initially due to travel to Sydney on the 4<sup>th</sup> and relax for two weeks of sightseeing,<sup>114</sup> but this was changed with the idea of a charity match on the 10<sup>th</sup> in Melbourne after which they were to journey to Sydney on the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> and then depart on the 17<sup>th</sup> back to Hong Kong.<sup>115</sup> Neither option occurred with the team travelling via Goulburn and thence to Wollongong to play one last match against a

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<sup>110</sup> "Football," *Argus*, 29 October, 1923.

<sup>111</sup> "Soccer Team," *Referee*, 7 November, 1923.

<sup>112</sup> "Chinese Embassy in Australia Sent Mail to Chinese Business Community," *Tung Wah Times*, 17 November, 1923.

<sup>113</sup> *Chinese Republic News*, 10 November, 1923.

<sup>114</sup> "South China Soccer Team's 20th and 21st Matches," *Chinese Republic News*, 27 October, 1923.

<sup>115</sup> "South China Soccer Team's 22nd and 23rd Matches," *Chinese Republic News*, 3 November, 1923.

selection of players from the South Coast region on 10 November. Before a 'large attendance' the two teams could not find the net, the game finishing without score.

The fourteen remaining Chinese soccer players and the manager sailed for Hong Kong on 17 November aboard the *SS Arafura*. Their record on the field was, from 24 games, eight wins, nine losses and seven draws. The Chinese scored 63 goals and conceded 55 goals. Two of the players, Li, the top goal scorer, and Lau, the acrobatic goalkeeper, 'had a circle of young ladies to bid them au revoir.' Each player took a mascot back with him and the team manager, Mok Hing, had a huge Australian flag as the team's souvenir.<sup>116</sup> The Chinese were moved by the occasion of the farewell, the captain Leung Yuk Tong said, upon leaving:

What can I say to thank you all? The fifteen weeks we have spent in Australia will ever be a very happy recollection to us all. We are going back to talk about Australia, and help foster that understanding which is necessary for the encouragement of trade between China and Australia. We hope to welcome an Australian team to China, and to return to your hospitable shores.<sup>117</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The tour of the Chinese provided many positive outcomes for the sport of soccer in Australia. In the early 1920s, soccer had emerged as a new force amongst the football codes. The re-formation of the Commonwealth Football Association helped solidify soccer as an organised sport while the international tours in the 1920s exposed soccer to parts of the country where other football codes held prominence. It would be this threat to their domination that created concerns for Australian rules and rugby league. Many a newspaper stated that '(T)he visit of the Chinese team should do much to improve the

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<sup>116</sup> "Back to China," *Sunday Times*, 18 November, 1923.

<sup>117</sup> A. J. Boyd, "Chinese Soccer Captain's Farewell Message to Australia through the Referee," *Referee*, 21 November, 1923.

standard and also in making the game more popular'.<sup>118</sup> Their response was to relegate the matches against the Chinese to venues incapable of holding the expected excessive crowds. In doing so they attempted to protect the sports space they had so laboriously created. The *Bulletin* spelt out the concerns of the other codes. "We stand for the Australian game of football," declared Daly, manager of the (South Australian) team lately in Melbourne; "never mind about soccer or any other game".<sup>119</sup> Even with this attitude of the officials of other sports, the tour brought about the importance for the CFA to take advantage of all the publicity to further the game throughout Australia.

The Chinese tour provided for the CFA a chance to put forward their best players in international competition. It was the longest tour by an international soccer team to Australia. While the CFA were harnessing their attention towards a possible English tour, they understood the importance of improving the quality of players in Australia and allowing themselves to view players from other States while they were competing against the Chinese. The make up of the Australian team for the tour to New Zealand in 1922 and the return tour by New Zealand prior to the visit of the Chinese consisted of only players from New South Wales and Queensland. The first international against China included a player from South Australia and one from Tasmania. The fifth and final international, played in Adelaide, used many players from South Australia and one from Victoria. Yet, the rest of the matches, significantly those in the southern States allowed for many others to put their names forward for possible selection in future Australian national teams. In 1925 a team from England finally did travel to Australia and during 1924, a team from Canada toured and for the international matches, players were selected from a wider group than just New South Wales and Queensland.

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<sup>118</sup> "International Soccer," *Examiner*, 22 October, 1923.

<sup>119</sup> *Bulletin*, 13 September, 1923.

In management, the creation of the company Australian Tours Limited was a success. The fact that the company made a significant profit justified its existence. The CFA noted that the profits from ventures of this nature could be returned to the game and the Association took note of the work of the committee intending to use its methods during future tours. The main aim of the company was to assist with the finances for the Chinese soccer tour. The company eventually provided assistance with the organisation of the extension of the tour to the States of South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania as well as to some smaller towns in NSW. Australian Tours Limited provided the platform for a successful tour.

In soccer terms the tour was an overwhelming success. It laid the foundation stone for future tours involving countries from around the world. While the two New Zealand ventures were important, they were minor when compared to the effect of the Chinese tour in Australia. The other codes stood up and took notice, realising that their own monopoly of football was being threatened. Finally, the tour would be an event for the Chinese and provide them with many talking points.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Chinese in Australia

#### Introduction

The 1923 tour posed many complexities for the Chinese community in Australia arising from the racialised perceptions white Australians had imposed on them. They recognised, and were ashamed of, the negative stereotype that existed relating to them. They realised that, owing to the marginalised nature of their community, they had been unable to shift this thinking within their own resources. The soccer tour offered this community an opportunity to alter these perceptions. Local Chinese hoped Australians would perceive them differently as a result of the sporting contest and thus allow for their acceptance into Australian society.

To the Chinese in Australia, the soccer tour was of significance for two different reasons, each a parallel story. First, it provided a way in which a middle-class group of Chinese could temper the stereotypical images of them as laundrymen and market gardeners, offering instead an image of equality in competition, skill, and conduct. Second, the selection of the team and the representation of their capacities connected the tour to the beginnings of a nationalist movement in China, based essentially in the south, which energised the people in China and had keen supporters in Australia. Australian Chinese saw in this tour not just a representation of the Chinese type, but the opportunity to present an image that affirmed the nationalist, middle-class, republican movement of the time. While interdependent in some ways, these parallel stories are best introduced separately.



The Chinese population of Australia, by the early 1920s, was a very small minority. At the 1921 census, only 21,000 stated that they had Chinese heritage. The introduction, and amendments, of the *Immigration Restriction Act* had seen the number of Chinese diminish from the larger nineteenth century figures to approximately one-third of a percent of the total Australian population.<sup>1</sup> Thus, numerically, in Australia, the Chinese were regarded no longer as a threat, although the potential challenge of their immigration to Australia in large numbers remained. Having endured such systemic identification, the Chinese in Australia understood the anxieties that the white Australians harboured, yet at the same time yearned for respect and acceptance. This chapter will explore the expectations and aspirations that the Chinese developed about how the tour would change those perceptions.

As noted in Chapter Two, the tour generated numerous inter-relationships between racial stereotypes, concepts of sport, masculinity and nationalism, and beyond that the future orientation of Australian policy towards China, and of China's place in the world. These inter-relationships carried through, and in a way became more complex, as the soccer players interacted with the local Chinese. As exhibited through the Chinese-language press in Sydney, the local Chinese displayed a sense of themselves, a cognizance of where they lay in the strata of the broader Australian community, and a desire to utilise the tour to their best advantage.

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<sup>1</sup> C. Y. Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975), 42; Christine Ingles, "Chinese in Australia," *International Migration Review* 6, no. 3 (1972): 267.



Mok Hing<sup>2</sup>

While Australian Chinese were conscious of their position and relationship to Europeans in Australia, events in their homeland were also of significance. Specifically, many of the Chinese in Australia were interested and involved in the politics of China, and particularly the Republican movement of Sun Yatsen and the Kuo Min Tang (KMT). Their aspirations for republican nationalism were revealed in the representation of the team, the qualities its members embodied, and their selection as a reflection of a more inclusive sense of the Chinese nation. These issues came to prominence not only through Millard's initiatives but reflected the different objectives of the tour's manager Mok Hing. A student of a high pedigree with connections to Oxford, Mok was a part of the bourgeois elite of Hong Kong. His main achievement was to be the formation of the Chinese Football Team in Hong Kong which later became the South China Athletic

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<sup>2</sup> "Wrong Impressions," *News*, 5 October, 1923.

Association (SCAA). As a local businessman in China, Mok played a crucial part in shaping the meaning of the tour for Australian Chinese - a meaning which was often not shared with European Australians. Especially as conveyed in the Chinese press, the tour had significance for this community which was often very distinct from what was presented in the Western press and even by the Chinese for consumption in the Western press.

### **Republicanism, representation and the Australian context**

As the opening decades of the twentieth century unfolded, so did the ideals and aims of the Chinese community as reflected through its language press in Australia. The *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 brought about the birth of the Melbourne-based *Chinese Times* (Aiguo bao). Along with the *Tung Wah Times* (Donghua bao) and the *Chinese Australian Herald* (Guangyi huabao) both from Sydney, the papers' aims were to react against local alienation by building strong ties to the 'motherland' to which they looked to for 'salvation from the humiliation and dishonour under which they suffered'. The *Chinese Australian Herald* urged its readers to relinquish their old habits and acquire modern European techniques to assist in fighting against the Australians and their policies.<sup>3</sup> By the end of the first decade the commentary offered in these papers turned towards Chinese nationalism as one clear expression of a new Chinese modernity demanding respect.

Following the abdication of the Emperor of China in 1912, a period of unsettled government commenced with many warring parties attempting to run the country. One such was the southern-based republican KMT, led by Sun Yatsen, which had been involved in a power struggle with, amongst others, the northern warlords who were led, from 1916, by the monarchist, Chang Tso Lin (Zhang Zuolin). Chang was backed by

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<sup>3</sup> C. F. Yong., *The New Gold Mountain*, 16 (see chap. 1, n. 43).

Japan, a country that had defeated China in the first Sino-Japanese war of 1894, had issued the demeaning twenty-one demands of 1915, and was developing a sphere of influence in northern China and Manchuria. This Japanese influence angered the republican Chinese in Australia who held affinity to the KMT and based the Oceanic regional headquarters of the movement in Melbourne, with other groups spread throughout the country.<sup>4</sup>

The Australian Chinese-language press reflected different positions on these issues. Two papers were founded to represent community views. The *Chinese Republic News* (Minguobao) had been established in 1914 by republican leaders sympathetic to the Nationalists' cause, 'to counter the propaganda of the conservatives' organ, the *Tung Wah Times*'.<sup>5</sup> Following a series of meetings in the late 1910s, the *Chinese World's News* (Gong bao) was also established to 'air its views on important political issues'.<sup>6</sup> The *Tung Wah Times* and the *Chinese Republic News* co-existed during the period of the tour, while the *Chinese Australian Herald* was disbanded in August of 1923.

These papers provided contrasting views of events associated with the tour as it unfolded, yet they also, together, gave the sense that the team was one representing South China and not just China as a whole. During the tour, the articles of the two papers demonstrated a clear involvement of the Chinese in Australia with issues in China, and this comes back to the core of the representative argument that Millard engaged in when selecting the team. As was discussed in Chapter Two, Millard was negotiating the sensitivities of the Chinese people and the question of representation. On the one hand he desired a team drawn from the whole of China and was backed in this by Gray, the YMCA, and the President of China. Countering this was the

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<sup>4</sup> John Fitzgerald, *Big White*, 127 (see intro., n. 5).

<sup>5</sup> Yong C. F., *The New Gold Mountain*, 164.

<sup>6</sup> Yong C. F., *The New Gold Mountain*, 8.

knowledge that to successfully put forward his argument of a healthy Chinese physique he would require the strongest team, and here the needs of the SCAA, representing Southern China, would have to be addressed. In Australia, the Chinese did not want their country to be seen as representative of a middle kingdom of dynasties, but instead of the Sun Yatsen image of a modern progressive nation. Part of that image, implicitly, was not one of distinct racial types but of the modern citizen. As Mok argued in a speech given early in the tour, although ‘the trip will be known ... for football contests, actually it will contribute in commercial, sports, international relationship and knowledge’.<sup>7</sup> Racial and civic typologies were thus caught up in a complex mix of who would best embody the new nation. In these ways again we can see the significance of the tour.

For the Chinese in Australia, the type they wanted to represent the homeland was not only to be one of good physique and playing ability, but also of good social stature. In the initial selection process Millard, and those in China, were encouraged to cultivate a university-educated, middle-class image for those athletes who toured. This aspiration was matched in Australia, where the soccer players were expected to act in accordance with this standing. The Australian Chinese of higher status, including merchantmen and journalists, were those who greeted and accorded them official receptions and who most openly associated themselves with the team and its mission. While the other Chinese were interested in the tour, their contribution would be left as an audience at the games.

Even the labelling of the team created a conflict amongst the press in relation to the issues of political and cultural representation. The *Chinese Republic News* and the *Tung Wah Times*, both chose to describe the team as the Nan Hua, or ‘South China’, Soccer Team, yet the latter interchanged South China with Chinese on numerous occasions.

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<sup>7</sup> “The State News,” *Tung Wah Times*, 25 August, 1923.

The papers desired to use the tour to promote the belief that the team not only symbolised South China, but also the KMT, even though there was no direct connection between the SCAA and the nationalist movement. There was in the local press a genuine confusion as to whether the team was representing the Republic of China, or just South China. So persuasive was this sense of China being defined by the South, that there was no consistent terminology to characterise the Chinese from other parts of the nation. They were variously described as from East, Central and North. This labelling conflict carried through to the Western papers which, influenced by the local Chinese, presumed that the team represented South China, even though they knew of the three players from the North.

### **Chinese Self-consciousness**

While the team was thus caught at the intersection of a range of current political debates in China it was still deeply enmeshed in the established themes of Australian racism. At Federation, the 'Chinese-Australian vision was one of a new nation in which all 'races' would be counted equal', a 'fair go' for all. Thus the editors and the readers of the Chinese press at the time 'saw themselves as part of exciting new developments' within the creation of a new nation.<sup>8</sup> In White Australia few shared this vision. Soon, the Chinese-language newspapers accordingly turned their attention to building, and retaining, a sense of Chineseness amongst the locals for fear that they would lose all possible identity. The Chinese in Australia believed they were losing connection to their homeland, and through the decades following the *Immigration Restriction Act*, their numbers dwindled. This awareness provoked the need to 'construct and maintain their

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<sup>8</sup> John Fitzgerald, "Visions of Australian Federation: The View from the Chinese Press Gallery," in *The Overseas Chinese in Australasia: History, Settlement and Interactions*, ed. Henry Chan, Ann Curthoys and Nora Chiang (Canberra: Centre for Chinese Southern Diaspora, Australian National University, 2001), 114.

distinctiveness, alongside their negotiation with and accommodation to the rest of society in which they live'.<sup>9</sup>

Those left in Australia were well aware of the stereotype of inferiority placed upon them, and in some ways their community owned the stereotype. They knew a history of racial persecution reflected a prevailing attitude amongst white Australians, but they also knew in looking at themselves that their circumstances further reinforced this inferiority.<sup>10</sup> As evidenced in the following quotation, from the *Chinese Republic News*, there was a self-consciousness of inferiority, a lack of status among Australians, and an insularity within Chinese society, that was provoked to expression by the prospect of the tour. Australian Chinese hoped that the soccer tour would provide a bridge towards acceptance and recognition as participants in an Australian society.

Overseas Chinese first arrived in Australia during the Qing Daoguang era [1820-50], followed by more and more arrivals. From the end of the Tongzhi era [1861-75] until the beginning of the Guangxu era [1875-1908], more than 100,000 came to Australia. By the end of the Guangxu era the Australian government passed a law, banning Chinese from entering Australia. After this, the elderly Chinese returned home and the sick passed away such that at this time there are only 20,000 or so Chinese left in the 6 Australian states. Of the Chinese who arrived, peasant workers made up the vast majority. Merchants were very few and there were even less scholars. When the quality of the Chinese peasant labourers is compared to the civilized nature of the Australians, it is no wonder that they looked down on us so much. Talking about the expulsion of the visitors, there are many reasons why Australians looked down on us Chinese. We only surmise that the peasant workers and merchants among the overseas Chinese lacked a fighting spirit. But this is ridiculous. In their spare time, foreigners entertain themselves with sporting activities while for Chinese, life consists of smoking and gambling. Chinese are ignorant and uninquisitive about the various equipment for artistry and pastimes and as far as hygiene is concerned, they still haven't made any progress. They are therefore not very observant. But now a South China soccer team has arrived for the first time to try their luck against the westerners. You will notice that the South China soccer team consists of young and ambitious

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<sup>9</sup> Ann Curthoys "'Chineseness' and Australian Identity", 20 (see chap. 2, n. 2).

<sup>10</sup> For a lengthy description of how the Chinese in Australia saw themselves as compared to whites in the Federation period and how they reacted to this, see Mei-fen Kuo, "The Making of a Diasporic Identity: The case of the Sydney Chinese Commercial Elite, 1890s-1900s," *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, no. 5 (2009): 336-363.

university students. Some of the visitors have won matches in Japan and we hope that they will bring glory to the motherland and win fame for the overseas Chinese on the Sydney battleground.<sup>11</sup>

The backdrop to this sense of the tour's redeeming significance has been astutely summarised by Carole Tan. In Australia, 'Chineseness' invoked Oriental images and stereotypes of being 'inherently and immutably inferior' to whites, and 'peculiar, dirty, morally depraved, prone to disease and unassimilable to the Australian way of life'. Hence the creation of 'difference' became part of the Australian Chinese way of life, from the schoolyard through to social encounters later in life.<sup>12</sup> They suffered through the 'exclusionary mechanisms that ... obstruct(ed) the complete acceptance of Chinese Australians as Australians despite rights of birth and citizenship, generational longevity and strong national and cultural identities grounded in Australia'. Further, white Australians imposed a 'Chinese' identity on these people 'whether they like(d) it or not, despite their attempts to create collective and individual identities of their own fashioning'. Thus, Australian Chinese identities and experiences were 'shaped by the race and racialisation process operating in Australia'.<sup>13</sup> A demeaning image of Chinese had been cultivated for white Australians. This was the prevailing context in which Millard, the Chinese soccer players, and educated Australian Chinese yearned for a change in perceptions to one more accommodating.

Facing both entrenched prejudice and legislatively enforced isolation, these Australian Chinese became a people on their own, no longer augmented by others from China and yet not able to develop their own identity. Thus by the early 1920s, the notion of diaspora appeared to have been lost within this Chineseness. Development of Chinese communities could no longer be made through the migration of dispersed communities.

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<sup>11</sup> "Wish the South China Soccer Team Success," *Chinese Republic News*, 4 August, 1923.

<sup>12</sup> Carole Tan, "Living with 'Difference': Growing up 'Chinese' in White Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 77 (2003): 101.

<sup>13</sup> Carole Tan, "'The Tyranny of Appearance': Chinese Australian Identities and the Politics of Difference," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 27, no. 1 (2006): 66.



They aspired to release themselves from the shackles of being called Chinese instead of Australian Chinese. They wanted to become accepted as Australians, not sojourners from China.<sup>14</sup> The Chinese in Australia were different from the Chinese in other countries, and wanted to be. Yet, these people were also eager to retain some of the traditional Chineseness, albeit one now associated with the nationalist resurgence of a modern China.<sup>15</sup>

It was the Chinese-language press that helped foster this desire of being both Chinese and Australian. They recognised that the two were different, yet were eager to be part of both. The press, along with Australian Chinese, were not intent on altering the policies of White Australia, but to find a wedge within what they hoped would be a culturally diverse country, a place where the Chinese could also be regarded as Australians.<sup>16</sup>

Yet Australian Chinese were also multi-classed and a tension existed between these classes which was again reflected through the press. The educated middle-class editors, journalists, merchantmen and others impressed on the workers, the laundrymen, the market gardeners and the miners, the need to participate in an attempt to remove the bonds of racial inferiority. The middle-class Chinese wanted not to be the spokesmen for all Australian Chinese, yet, at the same time they directed Chinese thought. It was the middle-class that was representative of the press. They seized the opportunity to recast a new image through the tour, yet it was absolutely crucial that they got the audience along so that they could do something about the inferior perceptions.

It would be these middle-class Chinese who provided the main contact for Millard. In Hong Kong and Shanghai, Millard dealt with a well-educated elite. They did not play

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<sup>14</sup> John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie*, 224 (see intro., n. 5).

<sup>15</sup> "Dates of the Matches," *Chinese Republic News* 11 August, 1923.

<sup>16</sup> for example see "The Hubbub of the Welcoming Committee," *Chinese Republic News* 18 August, 1923 for a description of how the papers were keen to include Westerners in their gatherings, and to mingle with them.

soccer, but had a very good sense of what they wanted to achieve from the tour. Similarly in Australia, he conversed with those sections of the Chinese community that too had little interest in soccer, but also recognised that they were associated with the modern Chinese nation. Both groups of Chinese envisaged Millard as the saviour from self-conscious inferiority.

Yet, prior to their arrival in Australia, the Chinese already felt shame arising from political sensitivities of which Millard was perhaps largely unaware. Such sensitivities were evident in the controversy surrounding the shipping for the tour. While the English-language press gave little mention of the fact that the soccer players would be transported on a Japanese steamer, the local Chinese press were disgusted, and insulted that this was the case, given the symbolism of the Chinese humiliation to the Japanese. They were also concerned not to criticize the players who, presumably would not have been willingly part of such embarrassment, for the blame had to lay elsewhere. The *Chinese Australian Herald* and the *Tung Wah Times* both condemned the organiser's decision to use a Japanese steamer and were concerned that the journey, and thus the tour, would take place at all under those auspices.<sup>17</sup> Here again we are reminded of many points of cultural and political sensitivity the tour had to negotiate among the local Chinese. Eventually when the Chinese arrived in early August a reporter from the *Chinese Republic News*, Li Xiangbo, was given a detailed explanation by the tour manager, Mok Hing.

Originally they were not willing to take this ship. However, because their time was tight, they could not put their travel off. It was a Westerner who booked their passage. Originally it was planned that we take the *Tango Maru*, but everyone refused. Then we were booked on the *Yoshino Maru*. The team members had already discussed it many times. If we were to take this boat then I was afraid that there would be disagreement. But if we didn't take this boat then we wouldn't be able

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<sup>17</sup> *Chinese Australian Herald*, 4 August, 1923; "The Dates of the Chinese Soccer Team Visit to Australia," *Tung Wah Times*, 21 July, 1923.

to make it in time. That would greatly disappoint both the Westerners and our local compatriots. Finally we decided that it would be better to still take this ship – and there weren't many who opposed this. However, we still have ample opportunity to wrest back the reputation of the South China Athletic Association, do the national sports circles proud and raise the profile of the local Chinese community.<sup>18</sup>

The requirement for the tour's success as an instrument to improve relations between the two countries outweighed notional political considerations at this point. White Australians knew little of the China-Japan situation and thus were blind to any concerns, but the Chinese newspapers needed to placate the local Chinese who were ashamed that their own people were transported on a Japanese ship. Yet the papers also realised the requirement to transfer any blame to the Westerners, implicating Millard, to avoid any discouragement of Chinese from attending the games. The Chinese returned to their homeland via the *S.S. Arafura* of the Eastern and Australian Line.

Thus, success of the local Chinese aims relating to the tour relied on the existence of a unified Chinese community. They recognised they existed within a community divided by class, and the middle-class, especially, were unhappy with the degrading image and yearned for change through a better managed tour. To the educated Chinese, and thus also the press, a single entity, and not one divided by class, provided a stronger voice. The arrival of the soccer players gave this idea of unity purpose. It presented the Chinese a chance to come together at the games as one to support their own nation and thus promote, and retain, their Chineseness, while also impressing on the white Australians that they could assimilate and participate in the one European trait that the Chinese lacked. The Chinese could show that they were able to cheer and support sport.

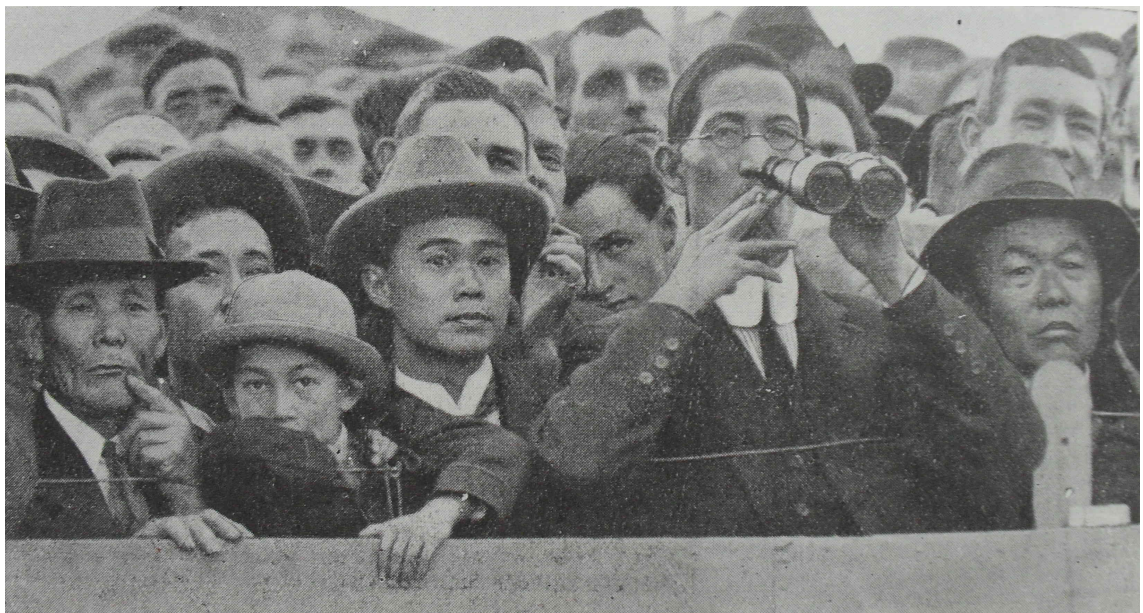
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<sup>18</sup> "We Talk to the Team Leader," *Chinese Republican News*, 11 August, 1923. Japanese names provided by author.

In an advertisement for the opening match, Mok worked with the press in this regard, encouraging the local Chinese to be part of an event, one that would promote China, in Western eyes.

In the past, very few local compatriots have gone to watch matches. Overseas Chinese are not very caring, but this is not surprising. On this occasion of the South China soccer team's visit, we Chinese should come out and wish them well. It will not cost much and you can experience something new and cheer them on. The individual's competitive spirit can be awakened and can give face to the Republic of China.<sup>19</sup>

The press implored all Chinese to attend, encourage the team and witness the player's prowess. No one really knew what to expect from the players, so the press did not want them abandoned to possible ridicule from white spectators. While their competitive spirit would be shown on the field, the local Chinese were required to show vociferous support.



New Barracker<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "Dates of the Matches," *Chinese Republic News*, 11 August, 1923.

<sup>20</sup> "New Barracker," *Sydney Mail*, 15 August, 1923.

The press wanted all Chinese to be unified under one banner of China, whether merchantmen, workers in gardens or soccer players. This, in fact, proved to be the case. The opening game drew Chinese from around Sydney and the regional districts, including women and babies. Throughout the match they sang songs to celebrate their countrymen. 'It was so loud that it almost blew your ears off.'<sup>21</sup>

A few incidents, however, demonstrated that white Australians did not appreciate this common face, and interpreted the tour as having ulterior motives. These motives were intended to reflect a desire to overcome Australian fears of insidious competition through the ruse of sport as opposed to accepting that sport demonstrated the new age of equality and competition the tour represented.

Here is one example in which the tour was perceived in a lesser light. In Newcastle the mayor believed the players were not in Australia to help the local Chinese, but were entrepreneurs and professionals making money from the venture. Thus he chose not to provide the Chinese soccer players the civic reception that had been arranged for them everywhere else on the tour. He said to his council that 'the Chinese had an ulterior motive in mind in competing this time and so there was no need for the City Government to welcome them'. It took a Chinese person, who was associated with the tour, to meet with the mayor and explain 'that this visit by the Chinese team to Australia was solely to represent China and to strengthen the sentiment between the two peoples and not for any ulterior motive'.<sup>22</sup> At a special dinner, hosted by the local Chinese, the mayor was a guest and apologised for his misguided assumption and asked the Chinese to forgive him.<sup>23</sup> What we see here are that these prejudices existed during the tour, yet

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<sup>21</sup> "Notes on Watching Soccer," *Chinese Republic News*, 18 August, 1923.

<sup>22</sup> "The South China Soccer Team's 67<sup>th</sup> Match," *Chinese Republic News*, 8 September, 1923.

<sup>23</sup> "The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Matches of the South China Soccer Team," *Chinese Republic News*, 15 September, 1923.

when those involved were confronted by the reality and facts of the tour, they realised its true significance.

### **Better China-Australian relations**

The example above of Australians treating the Chinese with suspicion, together with the incident of the Japanese steamer, gave the local Chinese impetus to work harder to use the tour to assist in creating stronger relations between China and Australia. While Millard's central aims were to redefine what Chinese were in the eyes of white Australians, through the use of physical specimens, he also provided the local Chinese with an opportunity to mix with the Europeans in Australia. The educated Chinese desired to be seen as existing on a similar social level to the Europeans. This 'mixing' became a common theme throughout the tour at nearly all dinners and other civic gatherings. At one of the earliest functions, held at a Chinese restaurant in Sydney, 'a lot of members of Western clubs were invited to sit together with the various local Sydney Chinese in order to convey a warm welcome'. Throughout the tour Mok, in particular, recognized 'what a good opportunity [such functions were] and what its education values were'.<sup>24</sup> He noted the 'bounteous hospitality' of all Australians and hoped that 'from herein afterwards, the relationship between Australians and Chinese will be closer'.<sup>25</sup>

Mok knew where the players stood in the venture and what their responsibilities were. Upon arrival he assured the Western papers that 'the team was not out for the sole object of conquest'. The players, Mok stated would 'accept defeat in the true sporting

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<sup>24</sup> "Chinese Soccer Players," *Mercury*, 16 October, 1923.

<sup>25</sup> "The Hubbub of the Welcoming Meeting," *Chinese Republic News*, 18 August, 1923.

spirit', for they realized that 'they were ambassadors for their country'.<sup>26</sup> These were well-educated men, who knew how to behave, could assimilate capably within a European society, and were willing to work with Millard and Mok in achieving the many aims of the tour. Thus with the assistance of the players, both as ambassadors for China and as educated men, Mok believe the trip 'would make for better understanding and good feeling towards each other, and was the beginning of a lasting friendship'.<sup>27</sup>

In working to express the ideas of a healthier relationship between Chinese and Europeans, Mok recognised the importance of using sport to break down the racial barriers. He realised that these barriers had caused friction between the two nations and he hoped that through the soccer tour, an acceptance, in China of how the Australians viewed them, as well as in Australia itself could be achieved. Mok was explaining that not only was there a need for Australians to accept the Chinese as equals, but also for the Chinese, specifically those back in China, to believe that the Australians were capable of doing this.

I am not saying that there is good feeling between China and Australia, and I would not say there is bad. The trouble is that there is not an understanding between the two peoples. I am hoping that this trip will do much to clear away any differences by showing the Chinese public that Australia has no bad feeling towards us.<sup>28</sup>

Mok also noted the commercial advantage that was attainable through positive relationships between the two countries. He hoped that the government may take heed and alter the policies of exclusion that were omitting at least educated Chinese from Australia. Mok understood that Australia did not want cheaper labour, but believed that

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<sup>26</sup> "Chinese Footballers," *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 7 August, 1923.

<sup>27</sup> "Soccer," *Adelaide Advertiser*, 5 October, 1923.

<sup>28</sup> "Wrong Impressions," *News*, 5 October, 1923.

there was room for the 'better class of people', as represented by the team, including merchantmen who should be allowed into the country.<sup>29</sup>

One of the ambassadors, the player Shen Kuo Sheun from Shanghai discussed what he considered as the results of the tour. Writing for his university newspaper, *Nanyang Zhoukan*, Shen pointed out that the Chinese in Australia, whom he regretted to say were all from Guangdong, are uneducated, have no Chinese schools to attend, and thus have no power in society. Shen understood the tour's importance, not only for international relationships between the two countries, but also to help the Chinese in Australia.

This football team not only represented China's football, but they in fact bore the responsibility of ambassadors, representing the largest country on earth, China, and meeting up with the newest country in the world, Australia. Who knows how much this will strengthen the sentiment between the two countries! So the result of our tour to Australia this time was not restricted to sport. The status of the international relations between Australia and China was promoted significantly. As to the position of the Chinese in Australian society, it was also significantly elevated. The most obvious point was, of course, that the sporting achievements of the Chinese established a relatively significant position internationally. Even though our achievements were not completely satisfactory, nevertheless, they were of some benefit.<sup>30</sup>

While this was Shen's overall view, it is interesting that he experienced, as a Central China player, the final aspect of the tension about representation that is discussed in this chapter. Shen, along with Wang Chen Sheng from Beijing, were caught up in the struggle of who, and what, was going to represent China once the team was in Australia. Like Millard eventually, their influence on team selection was non-existent, and considering they chose not to represent the SCAA, they were ostracised. The two players departed Australia after only 14 of the 24 matches had been played, and upon their return to China wrote a pair of letters. The two were not critical of the players, but disillusioned with the organisational and political faces of the tour. Yet from the above

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Guoquan Shen, "Fu Aozhou Sai Qiu Jian Wen Lu," *Nanyang Zhoukan*, 15 December, 1923, 63-69.



quote, Shen, nonetheless, noted that the tour had significant cultural benefits. To Shen, and Wang, the tour changed sentiments between the two countries, yet it also allowed for some unscrupulous individuals, even among the Chinese, to manipulate it for political reasons. Their story relates to the manager Mok, and the SCAA, and provides a different dimension to the story of the tour.

Mok represented the SCAA and through the tour did his utmost to publicise the organisation to Australians. The SCAA was a symbol of South China and all it meant politically. Mok created for the Australians an image of the SCAA as an association which had developed within a Western framework, and thus how it fitted within the Sun Yatsen mould of Westernising Chinese society in South China. Mok's aims were therefore to, at every opportunity, market his association. Yet, Mok, blinkered by his desire to promote the SCAA and South China, had also, possibly inadvertently, used the SCAA as a gateway to China, thus funnelling Australian social, political and cultural interests in China via Hong Kong and the KMT. Through the Western press, Mok's promotion of the SCAA gave white Australian readers a South China view of China.

Mok's main contribution to the representation debate took place on the field. As one of the selectors, along with the captain Leung Yuk Tong, he chose South China players ahead of those from Central China. Rarely did he alter the team line-up, even when the team was unable to win. Mok relied on the players to exhibit what South China could produce and considered those from elsewhere as inferior. As Shen and Wang argued, Mok had made sure that the enterprise was no longer for a team representing China to 'uphold her athletic prowess in a "White" country' but one 'turned into the honor and fame of the South China only',<sup>31</sup> and his insistence for retaining the same eleven for

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<sup>31</sup> "Chinese Footballers - Second Chapter," *South China Morning Post*, 22 November, 1923.

contiguous matches led to him being blamed for the poor record in those opening 14 games.

Mok had put the SCAA ahead of his responsibility as a team manager, and this raised the ire of the two players from Central China. When Millard arrived in Hong Kong from Shanghai he brought with him shirts for the team made in Shanghai. For reasons that are unclear, these were discarded and replaced with a set from the SCAA, that had the two Chinese characters for South China emblazoned on the front. Furthermore, there were only 13 jerseys in all, equalling the number of SCAA players. The SCAA was instilling within the players that they were the sole organisers of the tour, something Mok was to emphasise at many opportunities both in Australia and in China after the event. In doing so, the SCAA were alienating the three other players, who felt outraged that they had been stripped of their Chinese identity, and forced to play under another banner. Though unlike Shen and Wang, Chan So chose to stay with the team and eventually became a regular in many matches.

## **Conclusion**

The soccer tour to Australia brought with it many complex issues for the local Chinese. It created two parallel stories, both of which were played out through the tour and both of which were an integral part of the distinct meaning this tour had for the Chinese over and above its role for Millard and White Australia. The first presented an image of a more sophisticated nation, an image that was essentially associated with South China, Sun Yatsen and the KMT. The second was the choice of redressing the deep entrenched prejudice against Chinese by using the more sophisticated image of sportsmen.

While these stories were parallel, their combined effect was also significant. Through them a number of positives were gleaned for the local Chinese. Significantly, the Chinese and Westerners were able to interact more freely while attending the numerous

functions. Western eyes were opened to the fact that not only were the players educated, but so also were a number of the local Chinese, most being merchantmen and others of the middle classes. The soccer tour had breached the barrier between the Chinese and Australians in Australia. It had given the local Chinese a way of expressing themselves, one that could only exist with an external distracting force. The Chinese hoped that these relationships could be fostered and promoted into healthier and stronger associations, both in the social and commercial environments.

The tour had also given the local Chinese an avenue to be able to express themselves. They could be part of the wider Australian community, and be accepted on similar terms. At the games, among spectators there was no segregation. Chinese and Australians stood as one, cheered as one and laughed as one. For the brief time of the tour, the Chinese felt as though they were Australians, not just Chinese. Even with the few dissenters in the white press, the fact that they were Chinese became irrelevant, and ‘the difference in race was soon forgotten’,<sup>32</sup> or so was alleged in the glory of the moment. The local Chinese thus believed that their aims had been fulfilled. They handed a letter to the players on their departure which noted that ‘they did contribute a lot to the relationship between China and Australia’.<sup>33</sup>

There is perhaps an additional point to be made here. However isolated and marginalised the local Chinese community had become by 1923, they were still actively engaged in issues of Chinese nationalism, and in reconfiguring the image of expatriate Chinese in Australia in a way that would assist in raising awareness in a new modern destiny of the Chinese nation. The fact that a football tour provided such a promising vehicle in this regard underscores the power of the symbols Millard had begun exploring, but was far from alone in exploiting.

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<sup>32</sup> “Soccer,” *Daily Guardian*, 13 August, 1923.

<sup>33</sup> *Chinese Republic News*, 24 November, 1923.

## CHAPTER 5

### Media Analysis

#### Introduction

The Chinese soccer tour in 1923 provided Australians with a highly packaged media spectacle. The event lasted for thirteen months, offering an example of the function of sport in society at the time, particularly in relation to the presentation of images of masculinity in a team-based competitive spirit. The tour also fitted well with the style of sporting journalism that was evident in the period, which included colourful written and pictorial descriptions of events focusing on the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of players. The tour presented the media with an opportunity to celebrate sensationalism, and at the same time allowed it to work with, and against, common racial themes that fitted with anti-Asian government policies. Yet as the tour developed, the media's portrayal also confirmed the distinctive limited space available in the depiction of these athletes: the visitors, so carefully accepted, so obviously exceptions to prevailing stereotypes, were seen as separate from Australian Chinese, both bypassing and in some ways confirming the generalised racial stereotypes.

It is in these evolving depictions that the two main protagonists of the tour, Millard and Mok, took their opportunities while the Chinese were in Australia to influence the coverage of events in ways that advanced their own aspirations. And these aspirations also seem to have developed as the tour, and its impact, developed and unfolded. Although there were indications of Millard's, and to some extent Cubitt's, influence in directing the press prior to the players' arrival in Australia, it was not until late in the tour that Millard joined with Mok to express their specific desires to advance an agenda

that went beyond an alteration of immigration restrictions on Chinese to deal more specifically with the inhibitions on trade relations between Australia and China. These two themes of media coverage, of generating popular inquisitiveness relating to the Chinese sportsmen and then manipulating the interest to advance other causes, were present in the early period of the tour, yet by the time the players were in Melbourne, Millard and Mok were able to ride popular interest in the team and invoke their wider aspirations through lengthy editorial-like articles.

As we have seen, Australian knowledge of China was limited in many ways in 1923, and the tour created for the public an inquisitiveness that went beyond the notion of novelty. The tour invited Australians to interrogate the relationship between these sportsmen and 'Chineseness'. The public understood these were different Chinese to the Australian community, yet they were also intrigued about why this was the case. The press exploited this search, developing an image of the soccer players that carried positive overtones capable of advancing more general causes. Above all, the tour, and its press coverage, re-generated essentially colonial questions about a culture of Chinese diaspora that was disappearing within an Australian national imagination, infusing it with fresh questions relating to relations with the modern Chinese nation in the very different circumstances of the inter-war years.

Early interest by the press of a visit to Australia by Chinese sportsmen was sporadic. Even in the latter months of 1922 when planning was well advanced, there was scant mention of a possible tour. Yet in early 1923, one Sydney evening newspaper, the *Sun*, published a series of letters from China, written by Cubitt, the rugby league coach who joined Millard on the venture. These letters which dealt more with Cubitt's experience and observations on his travels than with the tour itself, thus established from the start a wide frame of reference for the tour. Cubitt's articles created a more engaging, unexpected impression of China, detailing a complex, multi-class social structure. From

the start, Cubitt delivered to the Australian public an understanding of a different, more diverse race, society and nation. This preparation was taken up by the other newspapers in Australia as the country prepared to host the soccer players.

In picking up Cubitt's letters, the media operated under two imperatives – economic and cultural. While the media are required, per existence, to secure sufficient audiences, they also 'offer sites for ritual confirmations of the legitimacy of the social order'. In Australia at the time of the Chinese tour, the normalised social order followed the hierarchy created by the White Australia policy. Within this dominant hierarchy, normal media practices were to 'reinforce the existing relations of power between and within groups'.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese tour challenged this practice, yet, as we will see, at a very low level. The Chinese soccer players rarely provoked racist sentiment in the media, or the masses, instead new categories were found in which to accommodate the challenge of the tour, and the opportunities it presented.

The following discussion of the media during the tour is separated into a series of chronological periods through which we witness the development of a maturity in the press in its understanding of China, the Chinese, and the tour. From the articles written by Cubitt in China, to the recognition of the Chinese as equals with whites on the sporting field, the press created an image that showed they had moved beyond a sense of racism towards the Chinese. It is this evolving acceptance, towards the end of the tour, that enabled Millard and Mok to fashion an understanding of the Chinese to their advantage. They traced and influenced the mood of the press in its coverage of the athletes, and interpreted this mood as a signal for the execution of their plan to recast Australia's stance on trade with China and the exclusion of Chinese merchantmen.

### **Australian press and race**

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Jakubowicz et al., ed. *Racism, Ethnicity and the Media* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 48.

Relations between the Australian press, the Chinese and race can be traced back to the gold-rush days of the mid-nineteenth century. The press became a medium for discussions of what Chinese labour presented and what it threatened. It also assisted in casting the Chinese in inferior roles, such as ‘Rice-eating man’,<sup>2</sup> as it compared the problems of the Chinese as discussed in Chapter One. The press continued to foster the anti-non-white narrative up to the 1920s as it discussed the threats of invasion, miscegenation and commercial concerns with cheap labour.

In a sporting context, Australian newspapers in the early twentieth century were actively engaged in crafting images of non-white sportsmen. For example, the treatment of African-American pugilist Jack Johnson in his 1908 defeat of Canadian Tommy Burns at Rushcutters Bay in Sydney was a clear example of the post-Federation reaction to non-white sportsmen.<sup>3</sup> With Australian parliamentarians embracing the racial thoughts of America and transposing it to the *Immigration Restriction Act*, and thus the White Australia policy, the media carried this blind adherence to the racist belief that people of colour lacked the mental and physical resolve to compete with white people. This quasi-Social Darwinism had its roots within a dominant discourse presenting a ‘tale of pioneering hardship, underscored by the self-predicating “white man’s burden” – to conquer the world, civilise it and then to provide enlightened leadership into the twentieth century’.<sup>4</sup> Through these images, the thought that coloured could dominate white was considered by the Australian public as either unimaginable or at least disconcerting. The *Immigration Restriction Act* lay on the foundations of white superiority over the coloured, and hence the desire to keep Australia White.

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<sup>2</sup> Lake and Reynolds. *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 27-29 (see intro., n. 6).

<sup>3</sup> see Broome, Richard. "Australian Reaction" (see intro., n. 3).

<sup>4</sup> Brendan Hokowhitu, "Race Tactics: The Racialised Athletic Body," *Junctures*, no. 1 (2003): 28.

Thus when Johnson achieved his victory, together with his ‘flashiness and gloating’ during the contest, he further enhanced the racist accounts of the fight which reinforced racialised polarities. The media saw its role was to exploit Johnson to enact broader cultural motives, leading to the creation of the philosophy of the search for the ‘great white hope’. On one hand, the media created the spectacle, and a sporting contest provided the vehicle, through which to rehearse racial prejudice. On the other, the media actively created an imagery that could compensate for Burns’ loss by reframing racism around ideals of civilisation rather than contest.<sup>5</sup> Johnson might have won the fight, but he did so as a brute, and thus the press portrayed him as ‘a huge primordial ape’ and a coon towering over his opponent ‘like a Brahma Pootra over a bantam’.<sup>6</sup> This interpretation casts the media in the role not just of reflecting a dominant ideology, but of actively and strategically creating images and rhetoric of white superiority to accommodate issues such as his victory. These broader cultural motives that were enacted by the press at the time were carried through the decades to the time of the soccer tour.

Outside the domain of sport, there were, though, some Australian Chinese who provided an exception to these stereotypes. The basis of their acceptance in white society proves the rule of exclusion. Otto Kong Sing<sup>7</sup> and Mei Quong Tart<sup>8</sup> each were cast in the culturally accepted category of ‘Anglo-Chinese’. Tart was commercially successful and Sing became a prominent lawyer, and they both assimilated very effectively. That the press were able to trade on such a concept divulges some degree of acceptance of ethnic and community diversity within a White Australian society. Yet

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<sup>5</sup> Phillip Hutchison, "The Media, Motives, and Jack Johnson: A Narrative Analysis of the Search for A "Great White Hope" (paper presented at the American Journalism Historians Association, Second Annual Rocky Mountain Regional Conference, Brigham Young University, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Broome, "Australian Reaction", 356-7; Geoffrey Ward, *Unforgivable Blackness*, 126-7 (see intro., n. 1).

<sup>7</sup> Osmond and McDermott. "Mixing Race", 339 (see chap. 3, n. 53).

<sup>8</sup> Mrs. Quong Tart, *The Life of Quong Tart: Or How a Foreigner Succeeded in a British Community* (Sydney: W.M. MacLardy Printing Works, 1911), 58.



what stands out within the press descriptions for Sing and Tart, was that they were educated and came from a different social strata to the more well-known individuals, in Australia, of their race. The fact they were exceptions to the barriers of racism only underlines that these barriers were still there.

The interest in sport from the public in the late nineteenth century brought about a market for sporting journals. Although some existed earlier in the century, the Melbourne *Sportsman* and the Sydney *Referee* by the 1880s had embraced the need to fulfil 'the burgeoning interest in and devotion to sport'.<sup>9</sup> The *Referee* was joined by the *Arrow* as successful sports papers in Sydney both highlighting that sport sold papers. The daily newspapers of this early period had other concerns and rarely devoted more than a few columns to sport. Yet, in the early decades of the twentieth century coverage of specific sporting events became both serious and more specialised. The general press provided full pages for sport with specific 'sporting' journalists. Certain sports created their own journals, including the two Sydney papers *Soccer News* and *Rugby League News*, both commencing in the early 1920s.

Thus, by the time of the soccer tour, Australia had a very sophisticated culture of sporting journalism and in the capital cities, by 1923, there was a peak of 26 daily newspapers with some sports coverage.<sup>10</sup> These papers divided sport first by racing, boxing and athletics, then the dominant code of football, and finally all other sports. Soccer was not a dominant code and thus gained little coverage in most newspapers. Further, while most sporting papers catered for a multi-class readership, others, like Melbourne's *Sporting Globe*, were for the 'working men rather than the gentleman

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<sup>9</sup> Chris Cunneen, "Elevating and Recording the People's Pastimes: Sydney Sporting Journalism 1886-1939," in *Sport: Money, Morality and the Media*, ed. Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan (Kensington, N.S.W.: New South Wales University Press, 1981), 164.

<sup>10</sup> Robin Berwick Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales* (Sydney: Sydney Up, 1976), 258.

participant'.<sup>11</sup> It was not unusual for these types of journals to also include political commentary and thus, as with the general papers like the *Bulletin*, *Truth* and *Daily Standard*, they were examples of the representation of both the class and political disposition of their editors.

### **A different Chinese**

In early 1923, the Sydney *Sun* recognised there existed, within the Australian white public, a lack of knowledge about what life in China was. It offered Cubitt an opportunity to provide a series of diary extracts, to be reprinted as articles, about life in China. The paper was involved in broadcasting information relating to the tour as early as its inception, and hence it considered the public would be curious about where these players originated. In doing so, its choice to divulge information about China provided an insight into aspects of that country which also dispelled some of the perceptions created by the White Australia policy.

Cubitt wrote six articles, commencing with a description of his trip to Hong Kong. They included information about the sportsmen, sports and the spectators. Cubitt also travelled into the country and delivered colourful descriptions of the life and superstitions of the Chinese. Yet throughout, Cubitt underlined his message with a distinct image of China as a country that contained a diverse culture. This culture contained a variety of classes that included the entrepreneurs already visible in Australia who were afforded upper-class transport on ferries from Hong Kong Island to Kowloon, the traditional agricultural working classes and those who were found begging in the street.<sup>12</sup> Thus Cubitt, and the *Sun*, were developing an audience, a readership, for a

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<sup>11</sup> Diedre Wilmott, "Early Sporting Newspapers: Mirrors of Australian Society," *The Latrobe Journal* 53 (1994): 34.

<sup>12</sup> Leslie Cubitt, "Sport in China," *Sun*, 6 February, 1923.

sophisticated understanding of the Chinese who lived in China, most of whom were quite different to Australian Chinese.

While Cubitt was delivering his treatise on general life in China through these articles, he also provided positive commentary on the physique of the Chinese sportsmen, whom he judged at soccer were ‘classy players’. Cubitt was doing his utmost to project an image of the athletes whom he believed would compete well with Australians. As he was also part of the venture he recognised that, subliminally through the articles, he could develop this image as a promotional tool to market the tour. Cubitt’s status as a former Australian rugby league captain gave his observations more weight; these were fine athletic specimens who can compete with white Australian sportsmen. Thus he employed terms like ‘nippiness’, ‘fleetness of foot’, ‘wonderful anticipation’, and ‘a grand cut of an athlete’<sup>13</sup> to impress upon the Australian public the qualities that competitive Chinese sportsmen possessed.

Cubitt’s final article, written on 4 April and published in mid-May, went well beyond what may have been asked of him by the *Sun* as he diverted from the discussion of sport and life in the cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai and provided a glimpse of traditional country life in China. Cubitt had ventured to a few towns north of Shanghai and took the readers with him as he gave a lengthy description of what it was like to live afar from the urban sprawl. He appeared to be searching for examples of the type of Chinese he knew, the market gardeners, the laundrymen and the shop keepers. Yet what he found was a traditional society with its superstitions and country way of life intact. The cities, he noted, had been penetrated by Western life.<sup>14</sup> This final article reinforced Cubitt’s commentary on the varying culture and diverse society from which he and

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<sup>13</sup> Leslie Cubitt, “Sport in China,” *Sun*, 13 February, 1923.

<sup>14</sup> Leslie Cubitt, “Old China,” *Sun*, 17 May, 1923.

Millard were to obtain the sportsmen. Yet, it also added a final stroke to the painting of China Cubitt was creating, one that would enhance the *Sun* readership's inquisitiveness.



Scenes from China

Messrs. Cubitt and Millard scattering coins  
among Chinese children.<sup>15</sup>

Cubitt finds an abandoned Chinese  
youngster.<sup>16</sup>

In the weeks leading up to the arrival of the team, the newspapers in Sydney and Brisbane chose to provide an equally attractive view of the players. Influenced by Cubitt's descriptions of China and the assumed novelty of the event, these papers created an image of the players as physically capable of performing on Australian sporting fields. While to some Australians the idea of competent Chinese sportsmen

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

was incomprehensible, Cubitt attempted to alleviate these concerns when he wrote about his experience with the players. ‘Hitherto, the idea of Chinese contesting supremacy with our own athletes may have been ridiculed. Personally, before actually seeing these men in action, I held the same distorted views regarding the athletic ability of the yellow men.’<sup>17</sup> Cubitt, and the press, were painting a picture of the Chinese soccer players as quite different to Australian Chinese. They explained to the public that Australians ‘cannot judge the Chinese because we have seen market gardeners and other labourers’.<sup>18</sup> Thus the media were expounding that the Chinese soccer players could easily be accepted into a white Australian sport, but as visitors only, as they fitted within the mould of good physical, competitive athletes.

Yet these portrayals extended beyond the physical capabilities of the soccer players to the way they should or might be treated by the Australian public. While some newspapers were requesting that the public ‘desist from making remarks that may be misunderstood’ by the visitors,<sup>19</sup> it would be a poem in the *Bulletin* that created most interest in the upcoming tour. The poem also requested Australians to be kind to the visiting Chinese, which, for a paper that had in 1908 altered its masthead from ‘Australia for Australians’ to ‘Australia for the White man’, appeared out of character.

Now, lusty barrackers and welkin-renders

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<sup>17</sup> “Chinese XI,” *Sun*, 1 August, 1923.

<sup>18</sup> “The Chinese Footballers,” *Referee*, 25 July, 1923

<sup>19</sup> “Chinese Footballers,” *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 7 August, 1923.

Wherever games are played, forbear to sling  
The gibes you use on Wilsons and Fenders  
At chaps like Le Wai Tong and Lam Yuk Ying.

The wit and humour sporting scribes dilate on  
And reckon Englishmen should understand  
(Beneath the boisterous persiflage) might grate on  
Coves from the Flowery Land.

Fresh from the realm of dignity and quiet  
Where nodding Mandarins from teacups sip,  
The sort of chyacking in which you riot  
Might give them what you'd call yourselves "the pip."

Vocabularies should be pruned to greet them ;  
Calls to "bog into" some Celestial's "frame"  
Or genial advice to "kill and eat them"  
Might put them off their game.

Applaud you may - encourage and advise, too -  
But 'ware of comments that good feeling 'nfar.  
Remember that these gents are hardly wise to  
The nuances of your vernacular.

Free speech - that priceless boon - none would deny you  
But phrases quite allowable and good  
For home consumption, hurled at Kwong and Shiu  
Might be misunderstood.

Curb your exuberances, then. Be placid  
And courteous in comment. Recollect  
They mightn't taste the sugars 'neath the acid  
That sports like Hobbs and Parkin can detect.

Roll up, to see them winners or defeated,  
You whom high Heav'n with leather lungs endows.  
But from your argot first I'd like deleted  
All references to "cows."<sup>20</sup>

The poem, and later articles and images presented in the *Bulletin* created a paradox within what had been a highly racialised magazine that was also nonetheless becoming highly cosmopolitan in the way it portrayed issues.<sup>21</sup> The article following the opening match accuses rugby league of lacking one of the most important Australian traits

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<sup>20</sup> "To The Barrackers," *Bulletin*, 9 August, 1923.

<sup>21</sup> for a discussion of the *Bulletin* in the late nineteenth century, see Sylvia Lawson, *The Archibald Paradox: A Strange Case of Authorship* (Melbourne: Allen Lane, 1983).

‘sportsmanship’ with its refusal to allow the that game to be played at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Using terms like ‘greedy’, ‘churlish’, and ‘uncouthness’ the *Bulletin* was also attacking the working classes that bred the sport. This was a different *Bulletin* to that of the late nineteenth century which was ‘the most influential exponent of the separatist model of masculinity which lay at the heart of the eulogies to the bushman’.<sup>22</sup> By the 1920s, while still maintaining its racist views, the paper represented a solidly respectable middle-class image of Australian popular culture, one where masculinity was defined ‘in terms of responsible breadwinning’.<sup>23</sup> These Chinese were known to be educated, middle-class athletes which would have fitted well into the mould of the type of person the *Bulletin* would put forward.

Australians were ready for the arrival of the Chinese. The public had been informed of the many aspects that made up the visiting soccer players. Yet they also knew some more of China, its culture, and where these visiting soccer players fitted within what was explained as a multi-class society. All that was left was for the players to prove themselves as the ‘right type’ of Chinese both on and off the field.

The Chinese players stopped in Brisbane on their way to Sydney. They were allowed to disembark, stretch their legs, and watch the interstate fixture between Queensland and New South Wales. Those who witnessed the players in this outing were the first to judge the validity of the commentary put forward by Cubitt and the press. The remarks were mixed, the more positive reproduced in the Sydney papers. There, it was said of the Chinese players, that their ‘splendid physique impressed onlookers’.<sup>24</sup> The Ipswich-based *Queensland Times*, though, was less reverent. ‘Though some are big, strong men, the majority pertain to the lithe, sinuous type, characteristic of Eastern races. They are

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<sup>22</sup> Marilyn Lake, “The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context,” *Australian Historical Studies* 22, no. 86 (1986): 118.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 130.

<sup>24</sup> “Chinese Footballers,” *Sun*, 5 August, 1923.

all young men, representative of Chinese culture.<sup>25</sup> This racialised impression opposed the anticipated view of the players by white Australians, and appeared as a rare exception. Yet it developed an impression that at the time of arrival, Australians were still unsure of what to expect, and this added to the creation of an inquisitiveness amongst the general public.

Upon arrival in Sydney on 6 August, descriptions of the players were no longer emphasising the physical qualities, but their social class. As was later observed by the Melbourne *Sun News Pictorial*, the players presented themselves as ‘dapper, with sticks and canes, but most of them are quietly and inconspicuously dressed’.<sup>26</sup> There was a sense of surprise among the sporting journalists as to seeing well-educated, middle-class, athletic Chinese in their midst. The surprise may have been related to the presumption by the press, even given what Cubitt had stated, that athletes from China were assumed to be from the working classes, that from which a fair portion of Australian football players of all codes emerged. The press explained that the players were ‘highly educated and refined, and unlike the vast majority of their countrymen, will be able to mingle in the best of circles’, and ‘they are athletes of a type far and above the class that we imagined them to be’.<sup>27</sup>

### **Opening game and opening eyes**

The opening match quelled the inquisitiveness that had, through the influence of the press in pre-match discussions, attracted a bumper crowd for the organisers. The Chinese team drew three-all with a selection drawn from NSW players, and the result was seen by the Australian public as proving the Chinese were equals to Europeans on the sporting field. The press had not been confident of a favourable result for the

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<sup>25</sup> “Chinese Soccer Team,” *Queensland Times*, 6 August, 1923.

<sup>26</sup> “Good Losers,” *Sun News Pictorial*, 28 September, 1923.

<sup>27</sup> “Soccer,” *Daily Standard*, 4 August, 1923.



Chinese, but upon viewing their performance in the opening match, the reporters enhanced their earlier positive commentary. For the white man, and its representative press, the game opened up a new image of the Chinese. It showed that sport could break down the racial barriers on the field. The game also created images of uncertainty about the Chinese race for those who were at the game and those who read the newspaper reports. The next two quotes from the same article, provide a glimpse into the new understanding that these witnesses of the match were developing of the Chinese through the opportunity provided by the soccer players. It was a more relaxed and accommodating feeling.

From all the cabbage-gardens, from desk and chop-suey restaurants the Chinese came in excited armies to the Showground, and with them jostled all the soccer enthusiasts of Sydney, until the game itself had melted all into a common factor in sportsmanship. And it will be safe to prophesy that from this day forth, the metropolis will order lettuces with a new-found reverence, and look at Chinese visitors with an expression of esteem.

For the Chinese athletes who composed the soccer-team were utterly unlike the Chinese of the comic-papers. They were tall and muscular men, quick on their feet and filled with football-cunning. They were as different from the usual market-gardeners as a giant from a pygmy. Australia has learned that China is not entirely composed of vegetable-horticulturalists.<sup>28</sup>

The press had provided those who chose not to attend the match a description of both China, within a nation-to-nation image, and the Chinese soccer players as something different to Australian Chinese yet also being considered as visitors. It had, within the context of the soccer team, addressed the curiosity that had developed over the past months since Cubitt's opening article. Together with the detailed descriptions, pictorial images provided a vivid representation of the way the press believed the Chinese players should be viewed.

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<sup>28</sup> "Shoo' Laddie!" *Sun*, 12 August, 1923.



All-A Samee<sup>29</sup>

The press, though, were emphasising the muscularity of the soccer players, and not the Australian Chinese. They were creating for the white public an alternative image, one they could live with for the period of the tour, while not demeaning the Chinese race. Thus, the quotes in combination with the cartoon “All-A Samee” were exactly what Millard wanted to demonstrate. Yet this alternative image went beyond creating a ‘different’ Chinese, it provided one in which these soccer players were viewed as equal, in the context of muscularity, with Europeans. The event had confirmed that once on the sporting field, Chinese and Europeans sportsmen could be equal.

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<sup>29</sup> *Smith's Weekly*, 18 August, 1923.

Most of the press had overcome their curiosity and realised the Chinese were not ‘duds’ and would perform admirably during the tour. Yet for one, a journalist from the *Sydney Sportsman*, the result held a different interest, one that lay in confusion. He asserted from viewing the Chinese, that ‘there is that unknown quality about them which we have learnt to believe emanates from the East, which holds the interest’.<sup>30</sup> The exoticism, orientalism and mystique the journalist alludes to here exhibits a level of confusion within his mind. He appears to be playing around the edges of racism, trying to change gear but not knowing how to. The journalist had witnessed a contrasting Chinese to what he had been taught. Yet, the athletes still emitted these distinctive characteristics which had been ingrained in his mind through decades of white Australia. He was not alone in his curiosity as the public sensed something different had happened, something that had drawn them to watch and participate.

The opening game also provided a warning, one the editor of the *Daily Guardian* interpreted in a more concerned manner. He realised that the result had awakened Australians to see the Chinaman as a ‘trier’ and that the players’ ‘actions speak louder than words’. What the game revealed was that the ability of the Chinese to learn to play soccer so quickly augured that they could adapt to the sterner games of life, including military, agricultural and manufacturing. ‘These are not pleasant thoughts, but they must be thought. China is very close to Australia. If she wakes up and her people get together it will be uncomfortable for us.’<sup>31</sup> Australians, from just one match, had learnt much about the athletic and social qualities of Chinese through these athletes, and now they had to take heed of what it potentially demonstrated in the wider world.

## Equals

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Chinese make Good,’ *Sydney Sportsman*, 14 August, 1923.

<sup>31</sup> “Mister John’ in Future,” *Daily Guardian*, 13 August, 1923.

The Chinese players were, after the opening match, considered by the press as equals with Europeans. Henceforth, during the tour, they were to be afforded this equality as match after match was described in neutral tones, as if it were two local teams in contest. While astonishment can be observed in the rare article, the general press commentary revealed a sense of an appreciative sentiment towards the Chinese players. They were congratulated upon success and encouraged upon defeat. Yet there were some in the press who appreciated the skills of the players but not their physicality. They were still committed to finding some difference between the two. The difference existed, through their cultures which defined the playing style of the players.<sup>32</sup> The Chinese were conservative and displayed good sportsmanship - they refused to convert any of the penalties awarded them.<sup>33</sup> Their style of play also followed this conservatism. Australian culture had roots within the need to be tough to survive and thus the Australian soccer players, most from the mines and industries, professed a harder style of play. As one writer emphasised when he stated that the Chinese were 'not accustomed to quite such robust football as is played by the white man', he was inadvertently explaining that there were two cultures, rather than two races, competing on the sporting field. And those cultures reflected social and economic influences - matters of class - more than they reflected matters of caste. Through the soccer match the spectators not only saw competing styles of play but also competing cultures, which in turn created the inquisitiveness in the press.

As the tour proceeded, the emphasis within the press moved from relating the Chinese soccer players to athleticism and their competency on the field, to a discussion of commercial and political opportunities suggested by the tour. This not only indicated a

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<sup>32</sup> Zhao Jun, "The Development of Chinese Football as Seen from the Comparison of Chinese and Western Cultures." *Journal of Wuhan University of Sport* 35, no. 3 (2001): 28-29.

<sup>33</sup> "Chinese Soccer Captain's Farewell Message to Australia Through the Referee," *Referee*, 21 November, 1923.

maturity within the press, but also the effectiveness of the belief by Millard and Mok that advertising the players' skills would effectively prepare the ground for their other concerns. Full articles, not just comments made at receptions and after match functions, began appearing in the newspapers from late September, when the team arrived in Melbourne. These emphasised that if the government removed its barriers for merchantmen to enter and work within Australia, trade relations were sure to improve. An extensive discussion on commercial relations between Australia and China will be presented in the next chapter.

What the discussion of trade and politics put forward was the realisation urged by Millard and Mok that the tour was less of a spectacle to the media than it had been up to and around the opening match. Newspapers were syndicated and articles that appeared in Sydney and Brisbane would be repeated elsewhere in the country. Local media coverage of the latter part of the tour, no longer presented the colourful commentary of earlier reports, but something different. Thus Millard and Mok fed these press with information, not about the tour or the players, but what they now believed the tour represented and what some of the aims of Chinese in China were. It allowed the two to discuss matters that would not normally reach the Australian white press, matters that related to Australia's relationship with China and the Chinese.

The articles also allowed for more powerful discussions of the commercial aims of the tour. With Millard becoming more adventurous in his accounts, the latter weeks of the tour were devoted to strong attacks on established policies and prejudices as evident in Australia's restrictive policies. He noted that these hindered progress towards better trade relations between Australia and China and believed that sport would be the ice-breaker. In the following extracts from a very long analysis of one of Millard's speeches in Launceston, Tasmania, the journalist conveys a distinct argument for what the tour was now about.

The visit of the Chinese soccer team was to give the people and the rulers of Australia an eye-opener... [Millard] considered as a young Australian and one who had its interests at heart that he had a message to deliver above the interests of sport. It was a national message... Nothing was keeping back the friendly or trade relations so much as [the immigration restrictions]. The time was coming when athletes would take their right place. He could prove that athletes had done what politicians failed to do... The Oriental was making progress into Western civilisation and ideas; and what struck him most was the elimination of the Oriental pastimes for the Western sports. If the eastern people adopted western sports, they would adopt their commercial, political, and social ideas.<sup>34</sup>

This message returns to Millard's essential aims. He understood that to break down the barriers of racism and alter the stereotypes of Chinese, the sporting team would prove the most effective solution. For this sporting team to take its rightful place within society and culture, it had to fit within those aims of sport, and as we noted in Chapter Two, of masculinity, domination and competitiveness. The athleticism and discipline of the competing teams placed the Chinese soccer players at a different level, a level acceptable in Western civilisation, and one where race may no longer be considered in any analysis of them. Further, a diminishing emphasis on sport allowed for a point where the press could build on discussions relating to the restrictions of Chinese merchantmen to Australia, for improving relations and for establishing new markets.

## **Conclusion**

Once completed, and all formalities passed off at the wharf in Sydney, the tour was also parcelled away. Within the eyes of the press it was not just race that was soon forgotten, but the tour itself. This was a packaged event. It commenced in October 1922 and was completed in November 1923. Yet during those thirteen months, and significantly the final three when the Chinese were in Australia, press treatment matured as they learnt about the players. They wanted to be part of the event, one they believed would interest the public. Yet as the tour developed, the press also understood that the tour meant more

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<sup>34</sup> "China and Australia," *Examiner*, 22 October, 1923.

and worked with these new directions. They accepted a sense of manipulation by Millard and Mok as each, in turn, drove the media to analyse the concerns of Chinese merchantmen of Australian immigration restriction.

To Australians the tour was an event that intrigued them, one that drew out their inquisitiveness as to how different the Chinese were to prevailing stereotypes. The press played an important role in presenting these Chinese players to the public. From the articles by Cubitt through to the opening game, the press provided, on the whole, a positive commentary about the players, one that not only kept the interest of their readers, but one that encouraged these same readers to venture out and view the Chinese for themselves. This they were successful with, evidenced by the crowd sizes throughout the country. While the press provided the commentary for the public, it was the readership that directed what the press would print. Australians knew little about China and the Chinese, and this the press recognised could be exploited.

Yet, as the novelty wore off and the tour attained alternative levels of significance, the press looked for other ways of gain advantage of the visiting Chinese. They chose to employ the use of long articles relating to interviews and speeches made by either Millard or Mok. In doing so, they laid themselves bare to the desires of the two and bypassed any consideration that the players were Chinese and that what they were publishing went against some of the tenets of immigration restriction. Race was not an issue here; what mattered more were the points at which two nations - or sections of nations - might connect. For the two proponents involved with the tour, the use of the media to pronounce their dissatisfaction with the policies of restriction, provided an avenue to broker positive public opinion of trading with China. Within the confines of the tour, the press worked with this objective, although not in any alliance with either the Chinese, Mok or Millard.

What the tour showed, through the press, was that it was a single event, one which demonstrated how artificial some of the racial stereotypes of the Chinese were in the early 1920s. Yet, it also exhibited that the press can develop a narrative that involves one set of Chinese, the soccer players, without associating them to the Australian Chinese community in its arguments. Its discussions gave us the perception that the press knew these were visiting Chinese, passers by in a small part of history that would not affect the general policies and perceptions pertaining to Chinese of the time, but may just open doors in relation to trade and commercial relations.



## CHAPTER 6

### Trade Relations

#### Introduction

Millard's decision to travel to China was to find competent Chinese sportsmen, yet, as we have already seen, his aims were inter-twined with a number of other themes. One theme that emanates throughout the tour from its beginnings until well after the team returned to China, is that of improving trade relations between Australia and China. Early in the planning process of the tour, Millard had witnessed the commentary in the *South China Morning Post* relating to the impediments to successful trade relations and had discussed the matter at length with merchantmen in Shanghai. He also had contacts with the President of China who wished success for the tour, believing it would improve trade. Thus, while trade was not one of Millard's initial aims as he left Australia, by the time he returned, it had moved very much closer to the forefront of the tour's objectives, and of the context in which the tour took place.

Millard was not alone in this crusade. As outlined in Chapter Four, the manager of the team, Mok Hing, worked with Millard in a quest to alter the restrictions placed on the merchantmen of China. That sport - in the particular form of this travelling team - was so readily drawn in to issues of trade between these two nations, confirmed the complex cultural fusion surrounding these issues at the time. Once again, the tour played its own revealing part in that transition from a disparaging concept of a threatening Chinese community in Australia, and awaiting to proliferate, to an entrepreneurial class, with a

distinctive ethnicity in part reflecting the modernising trajectory of China itself, awaiting recognition and opportunity.<sup>1</sup>

In meeting this transition, Australian politicians were placed in a quandary. The government was interested in exporting goods to China, yet it also chose to employ restrictive policies that hindered those they wanted to trade with, the Chinese merchantmen, from travelling to and living in Australia. There had been some reforms in permits relating to such entrepreneurs before World War I, but an impasse, particularly for the Chinese, still largely prevailed. One solution proposed was, at the commencement of the 1920s, to install a trade commissioner in China. The commissionership lasted only two and a half years as the vocal protectionists, mainly in Melbourne, convinced the government to close the position.

It remained the case, however, that China was a growing nation. When the treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895 enabled factories to be established freely in the treaty ports it also awakened China to the need for industrial development. Yet, this industrial development came with a cost, cheap labour and exploitation by foreign powers. By the 1920s the British, Japanese and Americans were each gaining advantage of the markets of cheap goods and the potential for trade with China.<sup>2</sup> Australia was not party to this development. Millard and Mok comprehended the status of trade and evaluated that a sporting event, well managed, could potentially shake the foundations of both Australian thought and its restrictive laws.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Jones, "What Happened to Australia's Chinese", 232 (see intro., n. 13).

<sup>2</sup> Cheng Yu-Kwei, *Foreign Trade and Industrial Development of China: An Historical and Integrated Analysis through 1948* (Washington: The University Press of Washington, D.C., 1956), 27-29.

## **Australia's need for trade with China**

Trade between Australia and China was poor, significantly when compared with other countries. Australia was lagging behind the United States and Great Britain. Following the end of World War I, Germany had also opened markets in China.<sup>3</sup> In 1921, of the £311 million of goods imported into China, Australia only contributed £700,000.<sup>4</sup> At the turn of the decade these figures proved damning for the Australian government. Australia was a country with ample resources and agricultural goods for export and China was emerging as a nation of potential consumers, increasingly westernised in its market.

The extent of Australia's disadvantage in trade with China was potentially marked considering its two notable advantages over Europe and America. First, Australia had geographical supremacy over the other markets, the distance being only a few weeks steamer trip. Yet, there was little or no direct steamship service to China, most ships having to travel via Japan.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, Australia was able to produce goods during the off-season to the northern hemisphere and thus complement the trade that China had with other nations. Australia desired to alter this imbalance.

It was in this context a trade commissioner was sent to Shanghai to develop relations between the two countries. In February 1921, Prime Minister William Morris Hughes appointed Edward S. Little to this position.<sup>6</sup> Hughes, a staunch racist, nonetheless understood the importance of trading with East Asian countries. Although he was strongly against the Japanese and fearful of their potential to become a dominating power in the East, he still encouraged trade relations, Japan being a major trading

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<sup>3</sup> "Trade with China," *Sun*, 14 October, 1922.

<sup>4</sup> "Openings in China," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January, 1923.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Don Fitch, *The Immortal Part : The Story of Edward Little, Australia's First Trade Commissioner in China* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2001), 2.

partner with Australia following the war. China, though, still required such cultivation as a trade partner and thus the decision to send Little to Shanghai.

Little's position was poisoned from the start. He was accused of corruption involving a company, Little Brothers Limited, run by his son-in-law. It would be a member of his own staff who would deliver the allegations to Australia. In Australia, Little's appointment was also received with derision, the main protagonists being the protectionists. 'By the 1920s manufacturers were sheltered by tariffs while farmers received subsidies that took a myriad of forms including pricing many government services at less than cost.'<sup>7</sup> The idea of cheap products from China reaching Australia was not one fostered by these protectionists. Despite these concerns, Little continued to open channels for trade with Australia, even if some of it created controversy. Little, though was fighting a losing battle as he had no support from any organised bureaucracy within the Australian government or from the business community,<sup>8</sup> and after a lengthy debate in the Australian Parliament in late July 1923, a matter of days after Millard and the soccer players had sailed for Australia, his position was terminated and Australia House in Shanghai closed.<sup>9</sup> What Little had encountered in Australia was a strong vocal element that did not want cheap Chinese imports to affect local industry under any circumstances.

Little realised that other countries, and particularly the USA, were developing a trade relationship through the education system. They had created their own school and encouraged the Chinese graduating students to attend universities in the USA. These students, it was argued, would then return to China where they 'put the American

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<sup>7</sup> S. Ville and D Merrit, "The Development of Large Scale Enterprise in Australia, 1910-64," *Business History* 42, no. 3 (2000): 26.

<sup>8</sup> Sandra Tweedie, *Trading Partners : Australia and Asia 1790-1993* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1994), 79-81.

<sup>9</sup> "Exit Little and Staff," *Daily Standard*, 26 July, 1923.

commercial and social practices into operation'.<sup>10</sup> Australia's efforts were much less forthcoming. Only 30 students arrived in Australia from 1912 to 1920 and another 215 were processed from 1921 to 1923.<sup>11</sup> These students were not recognised similarly to those who had been to the USA, and who were now holding positions within the Chinese political system. Most of the students in Australia were of the resident Chinese, and not being brought in to assist in building better relationships between the two countries. Australia had neglected an opportunity to gain a foothold in China through the education system. The main reason for this was the Australian government's restrictive immigration policy.

This same policy also caused Hughes concern as he put forward his advocacy for the development of stronger economic relations with East and South East Asia. His own government's legislation restricted entry to the same Chinese merchantmen he wished to deal with. Entry requirements for Chinese merchants were extremely rigid and very few remained in Australia. One Chinese merchantman remarked, in discussions with Australians in Hong Kong, that '(t)he immigration barrier set up against Chinese people, though claimed to be one of economic necessity is, in fact not in law, the result of the racial question', and that landings for Chinese merchantmen in Australia had not provided 'pleasant memories' and had he not had business in Australia, he preferred to stay on his ship.<sup>12</sup> The Chinese wanted to trade with Australia, but were hindered in their progress. Millard became the proponent to wrest a change in this imbalance, but before he could do so, he needed to learn what the problems were and how he may solve it.

### **Millard and Trade**

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<sup>10</sup> "China and Australia," *Examiner*, 22 October, 1923.

<sup>11</sup> Jones. "What Happened to Australia's Chinese", 222.

<sup>12</sup> T. K. Lin, "Correspondence: Chinese Team to Australia," *South China Morning Post*, 9 July, 1923.

Millard was to play an integral role in the relationship between trade and the tour prior to the team's arrival in Australia, yet many factors came into play that affected his thoughts. His initial interest was sparked well before the meetings he had in Shanghai with Chinese businessmen. As a journalist, he had been exposed to discussions that took place in the New Zealand papers on trade between New Zealand and China. These were the same papers through which he had been involved in the debates on China and the Chinese more generally. New Zealand, as with Australia, had survived the post-war economic downturn and was looking for new markets for its goods. In 1922, the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce had noted the significant increases in both imports and exports between Australia and the East, which they believed was mainly due to the work of Little. In an editorial of the *New Zealand Herald*, the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr J. L. Martin, stated his desire for a commissioner to 'visit Java, Singapore, China and Japan and make comprehensive reports to the government'.<sup>13</sup> Yet the New Zealand government stood still on the matter. Only weeks before Millard was to commence his venture, a follow-up article appeared in the same paper. The request made by Martin was repeated by a prominent Chinese merchantman, Mr Ma Hsiao Chin, who explained that China had a large demand for wool, frozen and preserved meats, butter and cheese.<sup>14</sup> These discussions lay in front of Millard as he was involved in other debates regarding the tour. No doubt they too, would have interested him.

When in Shanghai, Millard came into contact with Little, whom he had read about in New Zealand, and it was this connection that would galvanise his interest in trade. Little had provided Millard with the conduit to communicate with Australia on matters dealing with the soccer tour. The meeting of the two brought back memories of the trade discussions in New Zealand. The connection became stronger after the letter

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<sup>13</sup> "Opportunities in the East," *New Zealand Herald*, 4 April, 1922.

<sup>14</sup> "Trade Opportunities," *New Zealand Herald*, 21 August, 1922.

Millard had received from the President of China, Li Yuan-Hung which stated that '(w)ith the introduction of sports, I ardently hope that a closer friendship and increasing trade between the peoples of Australia and China may be progressively fulfilled'.<sup>15</sup> Yet by this time, he, and the tour, were no longer involved with New Zealand, but Australia. Millard recognised that he could use the tour to promote trade and, had in Little an eager ear when discussing trade relations between China and Australia.

Little provided Millard as much of the information and assistance that he could. Yet, Little knew of the problems that lay before Millard given his experiences with the protectionists in Australia. Even so, he too would have believed that using the soccer players to show the 'right kind of Chinese' would help traders open up new commercial possibilities. He knew that China was 'becoming more and more economically independent' through industrial progress.<sup>16</sup> Little encouraged the Chinese businessmen in Shanghai to discuss the matter with Millard and many meetings were held.<sup>17</sup> The merchantmen were interested in opening up markets in Australia and could see the tour providing the platform where this could be discussed. On his part, Millard put forward that 'a trade mission may be organised in China and sent to Australia', following the tour to consolidate the 'good will gains achieved by the athletes'.<sup>18</sup> Millard also recognised that these Chinese businessmen could be an entrepreneurial advantage to him. With no financial backing at that stage, the initial New Zealand syndicate having pulled out, the businessmen were convinced to sponsor the venture. Millard noted that the interest 'had spread so rapidly and in such volume that Chinese trade and

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<sup>15</sup> "President Strong for Soccer Tour," *China Press*, 21 April, 1923.

<sup>16</sup> "China's Needs," *Sun*, 19 January, 1923.

<sup>17</sup> "Dog Watch," *China Press*, 3 May, 1923.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

commercial organisations had become interested, and were giving both moral and financial support'.<sup>19</sup>

When Millard arrived in Hong Kong he was to meet with a new group of people who also had commercial interests. These, the SCAA, were the same middle class individuals whom, earlier in the year, he had tried to convince to participate in a rugby league tour. They belonged to a Hong Kong that was considered politically and economically by Australia as a separate entity to China, even though the Chinese thought differently. It was the entry point into Southern China for all Australian goods and the domain of the westernised ideals of Sun Yatsen. With this westernisation came the need for more goods, and thus a stronger reliance on trade. Statistics in the Australian *Commonwealth Yearbooks* for the first decades of the twentieth century show that trade with Hong Kong was stronger than with the rest of China.<sup>20</sup> Thus Millard found that thought of trade with Australia fitted well with those with whom he was about to discuss a soccer tour.

So intense was the interest that the Chairman of the SCAA became the manager of the team that toured. Mok held the position of chief Chinese freight broker to the company of Messrs. Sutterfield and Swire.<sup>21</sup> The timing would suggest that Mok had put himself in the position of manager so as to play an active role at the forefront of trade negotiations in Australia. This placed Mok in a strong position to discuss trade matters with Millard and while there is no evidence of any discussion taking place in Hong Kong, the two worked side-by-side when it came to trade discussions in the Australian arena. And as Chapter Four has already suggested, Mok would not just be representing his own interests, but those of the SCAA and thus also South China as a representative of the modern nation.

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> For a summary of the data, see Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 224-241.

<sup>21</sup> "Soccer," *Advertiser*, 5 October, 1923.



The team travelled to Australia on the Japanese steamer *Yoshino Maru* and here we find another significant pre-arrival influence on Millard. While many Chinese were insulted by the fact that the team were transported on a Japanese ship, Millard took advantage of the fact that amongst the passengers were a number of prominent Japanese. The most important was Count Yishii, a member of Japan's House of Peers and President of a delegation to observe social and economic conditions in the Commonwealth. Yishii stated that all Japan wanted was 'to promote peaceful trade and commerce with Australia'.<sup>22</sup> Thus Millard gained some tutoring on how to assess and develop trade relations from Yishii while on the ship to Australia, which put him in good stead when he arrived in Australia.

### **Australian relations**

Upon arrival in Sydney, Millard realised the immediate task ahead did not lie with ideas of trade, but his original aims to display alternative images of Chinese. Yet at no time was trade to be left abandoned from his commentary. Once again Millard proved himself to be an adroit operator in terms of choosing those papers that were most likely to support his cause, yet, at the same time, also juggling the needs of the tour. He professed, at every opportunity, that if the tour was successful, he was convinced that China would send a Trade Commissioner to carry on the good work of the players. Politicians saw this as a possible remedy to the restriction problem, as, to them, one influential Chinese businessman, the trade commissioner, was much better than allowing entry to more merchants. Thus at the initial welcoming dinner in Sydney, Mr Morrow, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the NSW Parliament, stated that 'the

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<sup>22</sup> "Best Feeling," *Queensland Times*, 6 August, 1923; "Peaceful Trade," *Queensland Times*, 6 August, 1923.

commercial relations of Australia and China would be greatly strengthened by the visit of the Chinese athletes'.<sup>23</sup>

As the tour progressed and Millard and Mok instigated their attacks on the immigration restriction policy, the Commonwealth government showed a different attitude. They were still enthusiastic to improve trade between the two countries, but now had to submit to the comments made by the two antagonists. By bringing the discussion out into the open, Millard and Mok had influenced a government that was willing to think about other possibilities than restriction. At a dinner to welcome the Chinese players in Hobart Senator J. E. Ogden said in response to comments made by Millard about immigration restrictions and trade, that he

hoped that as the result of the visit a better spirit would be cultivated between the two nations which would lead to a better understanding as regards trade relationship. The immigration restrictions were not the result of racial prejudice, but a pardonable national sentiment, which must not be taken as offence.<sup>24</sup>

This attempt by a Commonwealth member of Parliament to excuse the restrictive policies showed how keen he was to identify an alternative way of addressing recognised objectives.

Millard, together with Mok, found a helpful ally in the local Chinese community. As was discussed in Chapter Four, there was a defined Chinese middle class community in Australia, made up mainly of merchantmen with a sprinkling of others including the journalists and editors of the Chinese-language newspapers. They too, could see the benefits of the tour influencing the debate over trade relations and, although their primary aims in relation to the tour followed political and cultural lines, they worked with Millard and Mok in this endeavour. Significantly, it was a number of local Chinese Chambers of Commerce that provided the receptions to Mok, Millard and the players.

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<sup>23</sup> "Chinese Soccer XI," *Sun*, 8 August, 1923.

<sup>24</sup> "Chinese Soccer Players," *Mercury*, 16 October, 1923.

These receptions were not the only connection the players had with Australians. The players, themselves, had a role as they were asked to advertise Australia's economic prosperity. They were not only being used by Millard and Mok as the right kind of Chinese, but they became vehicles to transport information about Australian industry and agriculture to those in China. Sprinkled through the tour were trips to examine Australia's manufacturing and agricultural facilities. Australians were exhibiting what they had to offer to export to countries like China and also the technology used. With China developing itself into a new industrial nation, knowledge of alternative methods of manufacturing provided the visiting Chinese something to take back and develop in their own country. An early example was the visit to the engineering works of the Clyde Company in Sydney.<sup>25</sup> Yet, later, this educational process became an integral part of the tour.

The 17 boys are out here for education and experience. They are hard at work observing, and several of them have kept diaries. During their travels through New South Wales and Queensland they have inspected steel works, orchards, meat works, and a sheep station at Harden. Here they were struck by Australia's production of raw wool, but express wonder that it should be sent to England to be made up and then re-imported as the finished article.<sup>26</sup>

Millard was more vociferous than the Chinese in the matter of the benefits of the processing of Australian primary products being syphoned off to England. Australia was under the influence of Imperial preference for trade, partly because of the *Colonial Stock Act* (1900) of Great Britain. By the 1920s British governments had implemented this preference such that 'Australia (and New Zealand) ascended to the dubious status of Britain's number one debtor'.<sup>27</sup> At that time, there was a growing prominence of machinery goods in British exports to Australia.<sup>28</sup> In his first serious attack of the

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<sup>25</sup> "Football," *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner's Advocate*, 23 August, 1923.

<sup>26</sup> "Sporty Chinese," *Herald*, 29 September, 1923.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Cochrane, *Industrialization and Dependence* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), 26-27.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, 144.

immigration laws in Australia, he believed that a market in China would provide better returns for the growers in Australia. Immigration restrictions on Chinese were deterring wealthy merchantmen from travelling to Australia as they were 'too proud to come out (to Australia) and submit to the immigration laws'. Millard believed that removal, or at least easing, of the restrictions on merchantmen would create a better market for Australian goods.

If Chinese wool buyers were given a courteous welcome here, instead of the present degrading examination by the Customs, the continual shadowing, and the order to get out by a certain date, I am certain that we could dispose of a good deal of our wool at a higher price than we get in Europe.<sup>29</sup>

Millard had, finally, chosen to open up in the press, and when in Adelaide he and Mok found the *News* provided them with a strong voice. A resolute interest in South Australia for trade with East and South East Asia had existed over the previous few years. In 1919, and in 1921, the local commercial bodies worked with the State government to send Arthur Markwell on a tour that included India, Singapore and the Netherland East Indies to establish for the State better trade conditions. Unfortunately, the problems of high shipping costs and the favouring of Sydney and Melbourne by the Commonwealth government meant that no solution existed to help South Australia.<sup>30</sup> Thus when Millard and Mok appeared, a new zeal was taken up by the *News* to reopen discussions about trade with Asia. The paper was eager to allow the two to put forward their thoughts without censorship. Adelaide had been poorly treated by the Commonwealth and the *News* accepted the opportunity to hit back. Whether the paper believed any positives would come from the articles is unknown, but it provided Millard and Mok with a chance to voice their opinions unabated.

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<sup>29</sup> "China Wool Trade," *Herald*, 29 September, 1923.

<sup>30</sup> Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 75-76.

Mok, in one article provided a discussion of two contrasting elements that summed up the trade story. He believed that consenting to a larger number of Chinese merchantmen to enter Australia and opening up trade channels was required.<sup>31</sup> ‘(O)ne mistake, I think, that has been made is by Australia excluding all Chinese... In keeping the Chinese merchants and better class of people out you do not give us any idea of trade here.’<sup>32</sup> Mok hoped that the soccer players, seen by Australians as the better class of Chinese, would assist in altering these ideas of Australians. In a somewhat contradictory sense, Mok also chastised Australia for its high cost of producing goods, complaining that ‘your high cost of labour makes it impossible to compete with other countries’ and that the general cost of food and other goods in Australia being ‘nearly double our prices’. Mok believed that Australians should consolidate the middle class entrepreneurial spirit by building closer ties with equivalent figures in China and free itself of the need to do the menial work by bringing in cheap labour from China, the two not being allowed by the white Australia policy.<sup>33</sup>

This brings us back to the beginning of the initial concept of the tour. For while Mok was suggesting the Chinese be employed on the docks and in the industries it is a strange similarity to Millard’s initial viewing of the Chinese Labour Corps, brought in to do the same menial tasks in Étaples and Rouen. Yet, was Mok suggesting that these were the coolies from South China, Australians were very familiar with, or the physically well-built labourers from the Shantung region Millard wanted to show? Either way, the tour had effectively provided an opportunity to present a generally diverse image of a modernising Chinese nation and to work on points of genuine integration of Australian society and economy.

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<sup>31</sup> see Jones. "What Happened to Australia's Chinese", 222 for a discussion on the numbers of Chinese merchantmen allowed into and living in Australia.

<sup>32</sup> "Wrong Impressions," *News*, 5 October, 1923.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

## **Conclusion**

The trip to China became a learning exercise for Millard as he realised that exploring trade relations between China and Australia would eventually become a full-time job. From his earliest recollections of reading articles in the New Zealand papers prior to the inception of the tour, through to the latter part of the Australian leg of the event, Millard would be engulfed in this phenomenon. He implored Australian authorities to open up better commercial relations with China. Improving trade was not one of his initial aims, yet by the time he became exposed to the merchantmen in Shanghai, he recognised its potential, not only for when he was in Australia, but also within an entrepreneurial sense to help finance the tour.

Along the way Millard was influenced by a number of sources. The initial articles in New Zealand discussed the need to open up trade with China and send a commissioner to view its possibility. When he got to Shanghai, he met up with Little and began to understand the complexities involved in developing trade between the two countries and the problems that lay before him back in Australia, most specifically the protectionists. He was also met by the local Chinese merchantmen who were interested in using the tour and the players to advertise their country. As were those in Hong Kong, on his return there, although their interests lay more with westernised ideals. On the trip to Australia he not only discussed matters more freely with Mok, the team manager, but also with a party of Japanese who were working on improving their own trade relations. Thus, with all of these influences and experiences, Millard presumed he had enough ammunition to deal with trade when he got to Australia.

In Australia, Millard believed he was successful in his objectives. He had, eventually, been able to bring out into the open discussions about the relationship between the Australian immigration restriction policy and improving relationships between China

and Australia. Through a breakdown of these barriers, Millard hoped that the tour would also bring about better trade relations. In August 1924 a Commissioner did arrive in Sydney, Mr Walter Hanming Chen, who believed his time in Australia would help ‘to bring about closer friendship and to foster trade and commerce’.<sup>34</sup> Further, although it is unknown how related it might be, the export figures for Australian goods of wheat, flour, lead and sandalwood to China all spiked during the 1923-24 financial year, not returning to these levels for at least a decade. Even following extensive research, the reason for this remains unknown, yet for Hong Kong, the same goods barely made an impression on the statistics.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “China Trade,” *South China Morning Post*, 16 August, 1924.

<sup>35</sup> *Yearbooks of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 13 (1920) to 22 (1929).

## Conclusion

On 22 October 1923, toward the end of the tour, the Launceston *Examiner* observed how effectively Millard's enterprise had met its many objectives:

The visit of the Chinese team should do much to improve the standard [initially of soccer] and also in making the game more popular. It was subsequently learned that the object of the visit of the Chinese team to Australia was not purely for sport, but very largely with a view of endeavouring to bring about a better feeling between the two countries commercially, and in order to provide a number of Chinese students with an opportunity of gaining first hand knowledge of Australia, its people, and customs. In this respect the value of the visit can hardly be underestimated.<sup>1</sup>

This assessment indicates an acceptance of the inter-related aims of what had at first seemed an extraordinary series of events, and which had held the attention of a significant portion of the Australian public for three months. While the tour had been, of its essence, a carefully circumscribed program – the athletes came, they played, they left – this thesis has argued that its significance extends a good deal beyond a passing spectacle. The boundaries which defined it as a sporting tour no doubt made it possible to manage this degree of popular exposure to the face of a new China, but its meanings went beyond the crowds at sporting fields and receptions. Through the tour, a range of concerns Australians had pertaining to the intersections between race, class and cultural, economic and political development came to the fore. The tour, in its own time, contributed to exposing that 'big white lie' of inherent and intractable difference John Fitzgerald has identified in representations of the Chinese in Australia, and – as this thesis has sought to show – an historical analysis of its context confirms the considerable creativity, initiative and receptiveness that could exist in relations between Chinese and Australians.

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<sup>1</sup> "International Soccer," *Examiner*, 22 October, 1923.



Each chapter of this thesis has identified these elements of constructive, if opportunistic engagement with the tour and what it might achieve. From the start, Millard's search for the 'right kind of Chinese' expressed elements of idealism and wily business sense, and those who lent support to the venture, whether as investors, sporting associations and promoters, businessmen or politician, the press or the spectators themselves, did so because of what the tour might offer them as much, and probably more, than because of the altruistic appeal of 'bringing about a better feeling' between two nations and their people. The tour was both an exercise in populism, with plenty of precedents in exploiting the appeal of a contest of races in attracting a crowd, and in public relations, using an event to convey larger messages. But its success in either dimension was dependant on its success in the other. From this perspective, while it is difficult to identify any single influence or change which can be attributed primarily to the tour, the tour's significance in marking a break between representations of the 'laundry-man' and the modern citizen was considerable.

As a contribution to sporting history, this thesis endorses the importance of understanding 'sports space' and its use and manipulation. The arrival of the Chinese soccer team meant that other, dominant codes stood up and took notice of the emergence of soccer as a spectator sport. While these codes did what they could to hinder the progress of soccer, the tour assisted soccer to gain a foothold in the highly competitive football landscape of Australia, one it would fight hard not to relinquish.

As a contribution to cultural history, this thesis underscores the need to appreciate the dynamic role of the press of that period in both reflecting and creating new fields of interest in society. Australian editors and journalists latched on to the tour with enthusiasm. They explored an inquisitiveness and curiosity regarding what 'type' of Chinese would visit Australia as sportsmen, and fostered debates that discussed race, security, whiteness and population in terms that went beyond usual stereotypes. In

choosing not to describe the Chinese in disparaging and demeaning terms, the press either exploited the opportunity to develop a more sophisticated racism, modelled along the lines of ‘the exception that proves the rule’, or to accept that the tour provided opportunities to move beyond such stereotypes, and question – for neither the first or the last time – what purposes were being served by them. Again, Fitzgerald’s argument is apposite here: an Australian historiography that responds to events such as the tour by asking only how it related to the over-arching White Australia policy greatly diminishes our capacity to understand what was often transacted in the day-to-day domains of experience and tolerance, or – in Fitzgerald’s terms – ‘modernity and mateship’.

As political history, the tour exposes much more pragmatism in handling those issues of race and immigration than we often appreciate, particularly when matters of trade and security, and perceptions of a changing world are allowed into the frame. The local Chinese, for example, viewed the tour positively, working with it to achieve their own aims: to project an image of a new China, represented by Sun Yatsen and the KMT, and to use such an image of Chinese modernisation to break down older prejudices. In this respect, the tour did reflect, and in part enable, new relationships between the middle class Chinese in Australia and Europeans who met and mingled at functions for the soccer players.

As the *Examiner* noted, this was probably the main objective for Millard and Mok as the tour came to a close. Improving industrial and commercial relations between the China and Australia became the priority for both, in their different ways and according to their different interests. And to make progress on these matters the barriers of immigration restriction against Chinese merchantmen needed to be eased. On this score, Millard did create some interesting debates in the Australian papers, and eventually a trade commissioner arrived from China to further these ends. Yet his main

aim to ease restrictions on the Chinese, and to fundamentally alter the prejudices they reflected, would take a good deal longer to achieve.

The tour was a one-off event in history. It had its roots in the earliest perceptions of the Chinese in Australia nearly a century before. When Millard ventured the idea of a rugby league tour in October 1922, little would he have dreamed that a year later he would be fighting for the rights of Chinese merchantmen against the policies of White Australia. Millard was to continue his fight later in his life, while also remaining a sports journalist. There was for him no repeat of the excitement or publicity of the tour, or substantial progress in securing his ideas. Even so, the tour itself is well worth rescuing from the archives of White Australia as a good deal more than a curiosity.

## Appendix A

### Results of the 1923 Chinese tour to Australia

Date	Venue	Opponent	Result	
11 Aug	RAS Showground, Sydney	NSW	3-3	D
15 Aug	Sydney Cricket Ground No. 1	Metropolis (Sydney)	2-4	L
18 Aug	RAS Showgrounds, Sydney	AUSTRALIA	1-5	L
22 Aug	Clyde Oval, Sydney	Granville	2-2	D
25 Aug	Newcastle Showground	AUSTRALIA	3-4	L
28 Aug	Tramway Ground, Hamilton	Newcastle	1-7	L
1 Sep	Bode's Oval, Wollongong	Wollongong	1-1	D
5 Sep	Abermain Recreational Ground, South Maitland	Maitland	2-2	D
8 Sep	Brisbane Cricket Ground	Queensland	1-1	D
12 Sep	Ipswich Cricket Reserve	Ipswich	2-4	L
15 Sep	Brisbane Cricket Ground	AUSTRALIA	0-5	L
19 Sep	No. 1 Oval, Tamworth	Tamworth	9-0	W
22 Sep	RAS Showground, Sydney	AUSTRALIA	3-1	W
26 Sep	Murrumburrah Showground	Metropolis (Sydney)	2-3	L
29 Sep	Fitzroy Oval, Melbourne	Australian Select	0-2	L
3 Oct	Jubilee Oval, Adelaide	South Australia	6-2	W
6 Oct	Jubilee Oval, Adelaide	AUSTRALIA	2-2	D
9 Oct	Melbourne Cricket Ground	Victoria	3-1	W
13 Oct	North Hobart Oval, Hobart	Tasmania	1-2	L
17 Oct	North Hobart Oval, Hobart	Hobart	8-1	W
20 Oct	Cricket Ground, Launceston	Tasmania	4-1	W
24 Oct	Cricket Ground, Launceston	Launceston	5-1	W
27 Oct	Essendon Cricket Ground	Victoria	2-0	W
10 Nov	Woonona, Wollongong	South Coast	0-0	D
24 Games	8 Wins, 7 Draws, 9 Losses 63 goals scored 54 goals conceded			

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